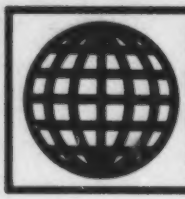

Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-94-241
Thursday
15 December 1994

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Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-94-241 *15 December 1994*

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Middle East Arms Control Group Meets

LD1312205194 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 13 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The proceedings of the 7th session of the working group on arms control and regional security in the Middle East opened in Tunis today. [passage omitted]

At the opening session, Tunisian delegation head Ahmed Ounis clarified that the meeting would provide a new opportunity to give impetus to the Middle East peace process, praising in particular, the participation of the Palestinian delegation. He pointed out that it will be futile to establish a security and cooperation program in the region without the participation of all parties. [passage omitted]

On his part, the head of the U.S. delegation expressed satisfaction with the good organization of the meeting and the continuous and increasing role played by Tunisia to support the peace process at this decisive stage. In this context he called on all sides to support Tunisia's efforts so that the session could be a new step in the process to attain comprehensive peace in the Middle East region.

Delegate Views Egyptian Proposal

NC1412205394 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1940 GMT 14 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Tunis, 14 Dec (MENA)—The Arms Control and Regional Security Committee, an offshoot of the multilateral talks of the Middle East peace process, resumed its seventh session today under the chairmanship of Ahmed Ounis, head of the Tunisian delegation, and the auspices of the United States and Russia.

In today's session the committee discussed the question of confidence-building measures among the parties concerned in the naval field, regional centers for national security, and regional communications centers.

Ambassador Nabil Fahmi, head of the Egyptian delegation, has stated that he presented to the committee yesterday an Egyptian proposal to form a working group to negotiate concerning various aspects of arms control and the control of weapons of mass destruction as well as space-based and conventional weapons. Under the proposals, these groups [as received] will discuss the establishment of a demilitarized zone in the Middle East and lay down a system to verify the implementation of the required regulations, should such a zone be established, with the collaboration of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Ambassador Fahmi hoped that the committee will approve this proposal during the current session.

Ambassador Fahmi noted that contacts are still under way among the various participants to issue a declaration of principles on arms control and regional security in the Middle East. He added: We have not yet reached an agreement on this declaration and consultations will continue on this matter so that a declaration may be issued. He pointed out that the Egyptian delegation held contacts last night with the U.S., Russian, Israeli, Palestinian, Algerian, Tunisian, and Saudi Arabian delegations to discuss the items on the agenda of the committee.

The committee meetings opened yesterday and will end tomorrow, Thursday.

Palestinian Refugee Jobs, Conditions Discussed

NC1412205594 Paris AFP in English 1647 GMT 14 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Ankara, Dec 14 (AFP)—Million-dollar projects to boost living conditions for Palestinian refugees and find them jobs were discussed here Wednesday [14 December] by delegates from 40 countries and organisations.

Officials at the multilateral Middle East talks, chaired by Canada, said the 250 delegates discussed reports covering job creation, aid for children, public health, social and economic infrastructure and developing human resources.

Some 2.73 million Palestinians are registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA). Thirty-four percent of them live in camps.

The multilateral talks on refugees form part of the Middle East peace process launched at the Madrid conference in 1991.

Turkey proposed a 20-million-dollar project to provide jobs and training for 10,500 Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The project would include handicapped people and former detainees, and run over a three-year period starting next June.

Delegates Tuesday discussed the reunification of families and statistical data.

The participants included Israel, Jordan, the Palestine Liberation Organisation, the European Union and the co-sponsors of the peace talks—the United States and Russia.

Israeli delegation chief Joseph Hadass [name as received] told AFP "socio-economic stability is needed" for peace in the self-rule areas of Gaza and Jericho in the West Bank.

"In Israel we are aware of the need to resolve the refugee problem."

Hadass said the living conditions of refugees must be improved, but complained of "the Palestinians" mistrust towards Israel.

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"Our Palestinian friends should somehow adapt and move from a state of war to the state of peace that needs to be created."

Syria and Lebanon, which have 306,000 and 325,000 Palestinian refugees respectively, have boycotted the meeting—the seventh round of talks on refugees.

They have refused to attend the multilateral talks until their deadlocked bilateral negotiations with Israel produce results.

The last session of multilateral talks on refugees was held in Cairo in May, soon after the launch of Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip and Jericho. Nearly 800,000 Palestinians, including 540,000 refugees, live in the two areas.

Palestinians, or people of Palestinian origin, make up 1.8 million of Jordan's four million inhabitants, according to official Jordanian statistics.

Four other multilateral tracks were launched in Madrid—security and disarmament, the environment, economic cooperation and water resources.

Arab-Israeli Talks

Israeli-Palestinian Negotiators Continue Talks

Elections, Redeployment on Agenda

NC1412135394 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1325 GMT 14 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 14 Dec (MENA)—The Palestinian-Israeli talks resumed in Cairo this afternoon. Palestinian Planning Minister Dr. Nabil Sha'th chaired the Palestinian side while the Israeli side was led by Uri Savir, Israeli Foreign Ministry director general.

MENA has learned that the Palestinian delegation met in a closed session before the negotiations to discuss the topics to be raised during the current round. Dr. Sah'th met privately with the head of the Israeli delegation to discuss issues relating to the negotiations and the agenda of this round.

The negotiators will discuss holding elections in the West Bank and Gaza and the redeployment of the Israeli troops beyond the Palestinian cities and villages before the elections start, to ensure the freedom and fairness of the Palestinian legislative elections. The current round of talks is scheduled to end tomorrow, Thursday.

Sha'th, Savir Comment on Talks

NC1412171794 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1545 GMT 14 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 14 Dec (MENA)—Dr. Nabil Sha'th, minister of planning and international cooperation in the Palestinian National Authority, has stated that the current round of Palestinian-Israeli talks seeks to discuss elections in the occupied Palestinian territories, the redeployment of the Israeli army beyond the Palestinian villages and cities, the transfer of the civilian powers to the Palestinian side, and the implementation of the remaining points of the Gaza-Jericho Agreement.

Dr. Sha'th pointed out that the current round is being held under a single leading committee to avoid squandering effort. He noted the necessity of not holding the legislative elections before the redeployment of the Israeli army and rejected holding elections under the occupation, as Israel wants.

In a statement to MENA today, Sha'th added: We understand the question of Israel's security, but in the meantime the Israelis must share the responsibility for fully implementing the Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles [DOP].

Sha'th pointed out that Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat will meet with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin in Cairo during the second half of next week, at the end of Rabin's visit to Japan on Monday [as received].

The previous round of negotiations involved two committees, the elections committee and the concept committee, which examines the redeployment of the Israeli army, the safe corridor between Gaza and Jericho and the corridors between the Palestinian areas and Egypt, Jordan, and Israel, and the release of the detainees. As of this round, there will be only one leading committee.

For his part, Savir declined to say if the Israeli delegation will propose a "limited" redeployment of the Israeli troops in the West Bank. He noted that the two delegations will benefit from the extremely good high-level talks held in Oslo. He stressed that the two delegations will negotiate the full implementation of the Palestinian-Israeli DOP.

In a statement to MENA, Savir added that the two sides had decided as of this round to merge the security and concept committees under one committee. They also decided to work effectively and rationally, he added.

Palestinian sources in Cairo have told MENA that no important results are expected from the current round of talks, since the Israeli side has not yet completed the necessary studies to set a timetable for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the Palestinian cities and villages and the cost of this withdrawal.

Redeployment Talks Resume

NC1512112694 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1030 GMT 15 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 15 Dec (MENA)—The Palestinian-Israeli negotiations resumed this morning "through one leading committee" to discuss the Israeli withdrawal from the towns and villages of the West Bank.

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The meetings are cochaired by Dr. Nabil Sha'th, minister of planning and international cooperation in the self-rule authority, and Yuri Savir, director general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry.

The two sides agreed earlier to set up a united committee to discuss redeploying the Israeli troops outside residential areas in the West Bank, the method and timing of withdrawal, and the outstanding points in the Gaza-Jericho Agreement, including the issues of prisoners, safe passage, and the crossing points.

The first round of the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations is expected to conclude this afternoon.

Israel Makes 'Detailed Proposal' on Elections

TA1512115194 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 15 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] At the Cairo talks today, Israel for the first time made the Palestinians a detailed proposal on the elections for the Palestinian Authority [PA] council. The proposal deals with the powers of the council to be elected, its structure, and the election process, according to Nabil Sha'th, head of the Palestinian delegation.

Our correspondent said that Israel suggests that the Oslo principle be upheld: The IDF will leave the cities in Judaea and Samaria prior to the elections, but the withdrawal will be only partial in some towns. Israel is prepared to modify its position on the size of the PA council and on direct elections for the head of the PA.

Major General Dani Rothschild, the coordinator of activities in the territories, believes the Israeli Police will continue to be responsible for ensuring that the law is upheld in Judaea and Samaria until all the powers are transferred to the PA. He believes it will not be possible to set up a Palestinian force to do that job before all the powers are transferred. Rothschild was responding to the demand of Bethlehem's deputy mayor to improve the execution of the law, which he claims is not being done. Our correspondent Dani Zaqen reports that the two spoke at the inauguration of a new building for Bethlehem's Magistrate's Court.

Palestinian Affairs

Text of Hamas Communique No 115

95AA0039A London FILASTIN AL-MUSLIMAH in Arabic October 94 p 7

[Hamas Communique No. 115 issued on 3 September 1994]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its periodic statement, the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, has condemned the Palestinian self-rule authority's sweeps and arrests against the Hamas members and supporters and said these arrests exposed the nature of the self-rule authority's task and role of suppressing the mujahidin and protecting the Zionists. The statement says:

Our struggling Palestinian people, our kinfolk in Palestine and the diaspora:

You have proved to the entire world that you insist on defying the enemy and pursuing the path of resistance and jihad until we remove the hated Zionist occupation from all our usurped land. The operations of our 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam's heroic fighters in Jerusalem, Gaza, and Ramallah have destroyed the Zionists' dreams of ending the jihad option and restraining our resistance against the occupation. They have underlined the fact that all the agreements and treaties will not prevent our people from exercising their natural right, endorsed by all laws and conventions, to continue their jihad and struggle against the occupation. We salute the militant 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassem Battalions, which have rejected humiliation, submission, and capitulation. We also salute all the fighters for freedom, dignity, and genuine—not false—independence.

Masses of our Palestinian people, who are rebelling against oppression and occupation:

Who would have imagined that Palestinian rebels and strugglers, who have raised the banners of struggle and resistance throughout the past decades, would become a tool of the occupation, defending its troops and settlements and suppressing the mujahidin? Who would have imagined that Palestinians would pursue and arbitrarily arrest the strugglers against occupation, in similar fashion to what used to happen under the Zionist occupation?

The self-rule authority has carried out wide-scale sweeps and arrests against the Hamas in the Gaza Strip. At the same time, the Zionist occupation authorities have carried out arrests among our people in Qabatiyah, al-Zawiyah, and other places in the West Bank. The officials of the Palestinian Authority have denounced these heroic operations and threatened to confiscate the weapons of the mujahidin and pursue the fighters who carried out the Gaza and Ramallah operations. This has removed all the masks and exposed the true Zionist intentions in the alleged peace process and the fictitious withdrawal from some parts of the Gaza Strip. It also has exposed, beyond any shadow of a doubt, the role and duties entrusted to the self-rule authority, which are to suppress the mujahidin and strugglers and provide security and protection to the Zionist soldiers and settlements.

The self-rule authority has made an abortive deceptive attempt to arouse the masses of our people against the Hamas and its militant operations in order to end its predicament and justify its recent repressive measures. All segments of our people have rejected and condemned these measures. The self-rule authority has claimed that the 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Battalions' militant operations

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in the Gaza Strip are making its negotiating position with the Zionists untenable. It also has claimed that these operations are hindering the expansion of the autonomous rule to the other parts of the West Bank, hampering the release of the detainees, and sabotaging the peace process with the Zionists.

What kind of peace is the self-rule authority is talking about when thousands of strugglers are still languishing in the Zionist occupation's detention camps? What kind of peace is it talking about when those who have been released from detention have been exiled or placed under house arrest in the self-rule areas, and prevented from returning to their homes and families, with the approval of the self-rule authority?

What sovereignty and independence are being threatened by the militant operations when the Zionist forces' commander in the Gaza Strip threatens that the Zionist army will intervene in the Gaza Strip at any time? What sovereignty and independence are being threatened when Danny Rothschild, head of the Zionist negotiating team, announces with insolence that "Israel" will remain the sole effective authority on the ground and that the role of the self-rule authority will be limited to providing services needed by the people? What sovereignty and independence are being threatened when the head of the self-rule authority cannot invite the Pakistani prime minister to visit the Gaza Strip before getting Rabin's approval?

What freedom of decisionmaking does the PLO's leadership have when the Zionist enemy is exercising continuous pressure on it to revoke the PLO's charter and all articles that incite against the Zionists or that speak about liberation, and when it scoffs at the members of the Palestine National Council by saying it will allow them to enter the self-rule areas to announce this insulting concession to their people on their territory?

No free person is embarrassed by resisting the occupation. This right is upheld by religious and temporal laws. What should embarrass the self-rule authority is the continued presence of the settlers and the joint patrols, the imposition of agent elements on this Authority, and the repeated enemy statements that the self-rule authority has not managed to protect it, as agreed upon in the Oslo and Cairo agreements, and the fact that it arrests the 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam fighters. Have the tasks and jurisdiction of the self-rule authority been extended to include the protection of the Zionists inside the green line so that the officials of the self-rule authority had to volunteer to denounce the heroic operation in Ramallah, inside the Zionist entity, and threaten to pursue its perpetrators and bring them to trial?

Our steadfast Palestinian people:

At a time when the self-rule authority has continued to carefully adhere to its commitments to the Zionists and to express its friendly sentiments to them, and at a time when the head of the self-rule authority has described the Zionists as "cousins and neighbors," this Authority has continued to carry out its repressive measures and restrict freedoms, using the same Zionist methods from which our Palestinian people have suffered for long under the occupation. The Authority has tried to interfere in the affairs of some independent Islamic institutions and societies to impose its hegemony on them. This is something that even the Zionist occupation authorities have not dared to do. The self-rule authority chased and tried to arrest the Palestinians who threw stones at the Zionists in the Gaza Strip. The Palestinian Authority has launched a plan to curtail the military forces of the Palestinian people by stopping the allocations to them, as was the case with the Palestine Liberation Army forces in Jordan. The Authority has not brought to account the security members who stirred up family conflicts in Rafah. It is still arbitrarily holding a number of people who were detained following the recent Gaza operations and is refusing to release them. The Palestinian Authority is also maintaining silence regarding some violations and provocations made by some agents and is refusing to punish the murderers of martyr Nasir Sallu-hah.

We in the Hamas renew our call on the self-rule authority to stop carrying out the duties of the occupation authorities, return to the ranks of its people and nation, and withdraw from the humiliating agreements, which have flung this Authority into the occupation's lap. We affirm that the path of jihad and resistance will remain our strategic option until occupation is removed. No repressive and terrorist attempts nor any obstacles and hardships will divert us from this path. We call for the following:

First, on the foreign level:

1. Hamas calls on all the forces, movements, and institutions in the Arab and Islamic world to denounce the repressive actions of the self-rule authority and to exert pressure on it to stop its violations against our people and their militant forces.

2. Hamas calls on the Arab and Islamic nation to shoulder its responsibility regarding the occupation authorities' repeated attacks against Palestinian mosques, the latest of which was the attempt to partition the al-Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron.

3. Hamas denounces the pressures the U.S. administration is exerting on the Arab states to end their boycott of the Zionist entity. It calls on all the Arab and Islamic states not to respond to these pressures. Hamas salutes the position of the Arab trade unions and institutions that have declared their rejection of normalization with the Zionist enemy.

4. Hamas calls on the brothers in Lebanon to improve the situation of the Palestinians there. It emphasizes our people's insistence on returning to their land and rejecting any attempt to settle them outside their Palestinian homeland.

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Second, on the internal level:

1. Hamas salutes the militant 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Battalions and calls on them to direct additional painful blows against Zionist targets. It believes that its pious martyrs, who carried out the Jerusalem operation on 12 August 1994, sacrificed their lives in anticipation of being with God in the hereafter.

2. Hamas appreciates the position of our Palestinian people and all their struggling forces, who have announced their solidarity with Hamas and rejection of the sweeps and arrests carried out against its members. It calls on them to express their rejection of all restrictions on liberties and attempts to confiscate the weapons of the mujahidin and strugglers against the occupation.

3. Hamas emphasizes its readiness to meet and talk with all the Palestinian parties. But it rejects any attempt to use such talks to make Hamas accept the feeble self-rule plan. It calls on all the parties to hold talks on the basis of supporting the steadfastness and struggle of our people to attain their rights and build a better future.

4. Hamas calls on our people to carry out further manifestations of solidarity with the detained strugglers in the occupation's prisons. It denounces the repeated postponement of the trial of Dr. 'Abd-al-'Aziz al—Rantisi, who is being held in the occupation prisons without charges or trial. It denounces the attempt of the self-rule authority to insult Shaykh Ahmad Yasin by offering to exchange him with Adnan Yasin, the spy who penetrated the PLO's institutions.

5. Hamas calls on our Palestinian people with all their vital forces to resist the Zionist occupation authorities' plot against the al-Ibrahimi Mosque and prevent them from carrying out their plan to partition it.

[Dated] 27 Rabi' al-Awwal 1415 AH, corresponding to 3 September 1994

Text of Hamas Communique No 116

95AA0039B London FILASTIN AL-MUSLIMAH in Arabic November 94 p 7

[Hamas Communique No. 116, issued on 6 October 1994]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its periodic statement, the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, has reiterated its keenness to maintain the unity of the Palestinian people and the prohibition against fratricide and the shedding of the Palestinian people's blood. It warned, at the same time, against advocates of strife, who exploit their positions to carry out designs that only serve the enemy. The statement says:

Our struggling Palestinian people, masses of our Arab and Islamic nation:

One year has passed since the humiliating and disgraceful agreement was concluded in Oslo. The negotiating and capitulation team has continued begging and offering concessions regarding our people's basic principles and rights. It is doing all this in order to prove its loyalty and complete submission to our usurping Zionist enemy and its careful adherence to all the humiliating dictates and conditions imposed by the unjust agreement.

Our vicious enemy has met these concessions and submissions with greater insolence and intransigence. It has proved to the world its hostile and hateful nature, which is based on treachery, repression, and expansion. Our enemy has gone to extremes in its repressive campaigns against our people and strugglers, escalating its expansionist policy to empty our Palestinian land of its people, annex more of it, and bring in hundreds of thousands of Zionist immigrants from all over the world to settle them here. The number of Zionist immigrants increased by about 22.5 percent during the first year of the Oslo agreement, compared to the year before. Zionist terrorist networks are being uncovered almost daily. These networks are consistently making plans to commit new massacres and slaughters against our Palestinian people, similar to the al-Ibrahimi Mosque massacre in Hebron.

Masses of our Palestinian people:

One year has passed since the inauspicious Oslo agreement was concluded. We have often warned against the danger of this agreement to our people, our cause, and our Arab and Islamic nations. We, our people, and our nation have a right to ask about the value of such agreements and what they have accomplished. Have these agreements succeeded in regaining our peoples' usurped rights to their land, sovereignty, and independence? Have these agreements achieved the promised security, stability, and economic prosperity for our patient people? Our people are still suffering from the deteriorating economic and security situation. Our enemy does not hesitate to declare Jericho a closed area and to establish military barriers inside the Gaza Strip to search vehicles and people, disregarding the existence of the Palestinian Authority [PA] or security forces.

The only thing accomplished by the Oslo and Cairo agreements was the wide opening of the door to the Zionist enemy to penetrate into the Arab and Islamic world and normalize the relations with it. These agreements prepared the way for the other Arab states to sign peace agreements and treaties with the Zionist entity. The Gulf Cooperation Council states have decided to end the second and third levels of the economic boycott imposed on companies cooperating with the Zionist entity, using the peace agreements with the Zionist enemy as a pretext. These states have announced that they will support any measure inside the Arab League to end the ban on direct trade with the Zionist entity. Tunisia and Morocco, under the same pretext and with the PLO's blessing, have decided to open a liaison office

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to oversee the joint economic interests with the Zionist entity. Through the meeting of Clinton, Hasan, and Peres, Jordan, too, has opened its doors to economic projects in preparation for the conclusion of a final peace agreement. Zionist delegations will participate in two economic conferences that will be held in Cairo and Casablanca this month and next month. The purpose of these conferences is to redraw the area's policies and features and strengthen the Zionist enemy's hegemony over it as part of the new Middle Eastern order being planned by the United States with Zionist instigation. During the past few weeks, several states moved or announced their intention to move their embassies to Jerusalem soon. These states are Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Bolivia, and Paraguay.

Masses of our struggling Palestinian people:

After receiving practical proof that its concessions are dangerous and the agreements it signed with the Zionist enemy are useless, we expected the self-rule authority to hasten to announce the failure of these agreements and withdraw from the conspiracy that aims at ending the Palestinian issue. Instead, it has hastened to confirm its arrogance and insistence on continuing its mistakes. On the anniversary of the Oslo agreement conspiracy, the self-rule authority signed a new Oslo declaration with the Zionist enemy under which it submitted to the Zionists' conditions, dropped Jerusalem from the plan of the countries offering aid, and reaffirmed its commitment to pursue the mujahidin and protect the Zionists.

The prime minister of the Zionist enemy has stated that the Palestinian Islamic forces are the principal threat to the Zionist entity. The self-rule authority, however, has continued to carry out its repressive measures against the militant groups, on behalf of the occupation authorities. It has arrested an additional number of mujahidin and banned the holding of political gatherings by Palestinians opposed to the settlement and capitulation process. Its officials have threatened to pursue and disarm members of the Hamas and the other militant movements. The authority's security forces have not hesitated to open fire on the mujahidin, as happened in the Gaza Strip, causing the martyrdom of police Captain Yusri al-Hamas and the wounding of two members of the 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Battalions, one of them seriously.

We in Hamas emphasize our keenness to maintain the unity of the Palestinian people and the prohibition against fratricide and the shedding of the Palestinian people's blood. We denounce the tendentious statements issued by Fatah and the PA, holding Hamas responsible for the martyrdom of Yusri al-Hamas. The al-Hamas family has issued a clear statement placing the responsibility for the crime squarely on the shoulders of the security forces, which opened fire on martyr al-Hamas and the 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam heroes and left them to bleed for several hours without assistance. We reaffirm our demand that the PA reveal the complete facts and punish the criminals. These criminals have proved that they do not care about the sanctity of Palestinian blood. We warn against the advocates of strife, who exploit their positions to carry out designs that only serve our enemy, which is occupying our land and shrines. While renewing our pledge to continue along the jihad path until our people attain all their rights, we call for the following:

First, on the foreign level:

1. Hamas denounces the campaigns launched by the official Arab regimes to normalize their relations with the Zionist enemy. It warns that such moves constitute a danger to the Arab nation's present and future. It calls on the Arabs to boycott the normalization conferences in Cairo and Casablanca.

2. Hamas denounces the decision of some states to move their embassies to Jerusalem. It calls for pressure to be exerted on the states which are considering such a move to deter them from it.

3. Hamas welcomes the release of the Islamic Salvation Front's leaders in Algeria, and hopes that this will be the first step toward establishing a multiparty system. It also calls on the Arab states to launch a dialogue with the Islamic forces and movements and not to accept the Zionist propaganda, which is seeking to cause internal strife in our nation.

Second, on the internal level:

1. Hamas salutes the 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Battalions and the other militant groups. It believes that its two heroes Amjad Nasir Akmil and Ahmad Salim Abu-al-Rabb, martyred in the car bomb they were preparing for a suicide attack against Zionist occupation targets on 2 September, have sacrificed their lives in anticipation of God's reward in the hereafter, and so did its martyrs Mustafa al-Hilah in Gaza and Nadir Abu-Shukhaydim in Hebron.

2. Hamas believes that its pious martyr Isma'il Budayr, treacherously and unjustly killed in the al-Salam Mosque in the Tulkarm refugee camp, has sacrificed his life in anticipation of God's reward in the hereafter. It affirms to our kinfolk in the Tulkarm camp—the camp of martyrs—that Hamas had nothing to do with the statements issued under different signatures, such as "the bold Hamas fighters, the Islamic Movement/the Islamic Bureau," and warns those who are behind the issuance of these statements. It also calls on our kinfolk to be vigilant and careful of those who spread rumors to defame Hamas.

3. Hamas condemns the campaigns of arrest carried out by the self-rule authority and calls on it to immediately release all the detainees irrespective of their political affiliations. It warns that threats made by some officials of the self-rule authority could cause strife among the Palestinian people.

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4. Hamas calls on our steadfast Palestinian people to maintain greater solidarity with the Palestinian detainees in the occupation's prisons. It demands that they all be released, foremost Shaykh Ahmad Yasin and Dr. 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Rantisi.

5. Hamas denounces the self-rule authority's laxity in dealing with the issue of the agents. Its negligence has encouraged them to continue to commit crimes against our people and to send threats to some families of the mujahidin. It calls on the self-rule authority to severely punish the martyr Nasir Salluhah's murderers, whose trial began last month. It warns the authority not to continue providing security and protection to the agents.

[Dated] Thursday, 30 Rabi' al-Thani 1415 AH, corresponding to 6 October 1994

Police Chief Discusses Stabbing, Newspaper Ban

NC1412215194 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2055 GMT 14 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Gaza, 14 Dec (MENA)—Brigadier General Ghazi al-Jabali, commander of the Palestinian police, said that the police are following up on today's incident in an Israeli settlement near Gaza in which an Israeli soldier was stabbed by a Palestinian from Gaza who was injured by another Israeli soldier who fired on him and hit him in the leg.

He said: The incident does not concern us because it happened in an Israeli settlement. But we are following up on it as we do with other incidents.

In a statement made to a MENA correspondent in Gaza tonight, he said that the suspects in the assassination of Hani al-'Abid, one of the leaders of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], in November have been arrested, noting that the names of the suspects published by the Palestinian press were not correct and their publication harmed innocent people.

Brig. Gen al-Jabali went on to say: Since assuming responsibility six months before, the Palestinian police force has made progress in training and discharging its duties so that it is comparable to the police in any country.

He denied that the police has any connection in banning or delaying the distribution of newspapers, because this is not its responsibility. He noted that the police force has not yet received the aid promised by the donor countries for paying the policemen's wages next March [date as received] but he added that he expects this aid to arrive in the very near future. [passage omitted]

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Algeria

FIS Sources Doubt Report of GIA, AIS Merger

MM1412163294 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 14 Dec 94 pp1, 4

[Report by Kamil al-Tawil: "Reports of Unity With the Armed Group Denied by Salvation Front"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London—According to a bulletin called AL-QITAL [the fighting] distributed in Paris yesterday, the Armed Islamic Group [GIA] and the Islamic Salvation Army [AIS] have united under the banner of the first, but Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] sources have cast doubt on the authenticity of the report and said that the Algerian intelligence service was behind it. Meanwhile, the FIS Executive Committee abroad (headed by Shaykh Rabeh Kebir) has appealed to the Islamic leaders to boycott Algeria at the Casablanca summit conference. [passage omitted]

This is not the first time that forged statements have been issued in the name of the GIA or the AIS. FIS sources say that the purpose of these statements is to create confusion in the ranks of the mujahidin, but observers of Algerian affairs note that for some time now the terminology used by AIS has been very close to the GIA terminology, coupled with similar closeness in field work. Reports from Algeria indicate the the GIA fighters often coordinate with the AIS and the two sides hold coordination meetings from time to time. [passage omitted]

The AL-QITAL bulletin yesterday said that the fact that the AIS had joined the GIA marked "the beginning of a real war" on the Algerian regime. It said that move was approved by FIS leaders Shaykh Abbassi Madani and Ali Belhadj, who are under house arrest. It carried a nine-point document signed by GIA leader Abou Abdelrahmane Amin (believed to be Djemal Zeytouni) which said that the AIS had joined the GIA, "the sole carrier of the banner of the legitimate jihad in Algeria."

Sources close to FIS, however, have cast doubt on that statement and said that "the mujahidin have received definite information about the creation of a new organ within the enemy's military intelligence service operating under the supervision of a brigadier general at the Ben 'Aknoun center. That organ uses all sinister methods to spread rumors, foment sedition between Muslims, and monitor news of the mujahidin by infiltrating the ranks of the jihad supporters." [passage omitted]

UGTA Chief Benhamouda on Union Positions

LD1412143694

[FBIS Editorial Report] Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic at 1102 GMT on 14 December carries a 50-minute recorded interview with Abdelhak Benhamouda, secretary general of the General Union of Algerian Workers, UGTA, by an unidentified correspondent in Algiers during the "Transformations" program. The date of the interview is not given.

Benhamouda discusses the UGTA and preparations for holding its ninth general conference. Benhamouda says the conference will outline the union's future path and examine its own reorganization. He adds that some sides have either attempted to exploit the union or destroy it. He adds that he wants to give up the union's leadership in order to allow a younger person to assume the responsibility.

Benhamouda says that the union has adopted an opposition posture against the leaders and lines of some political parties because they conflict with the union's goals. He adds that the union exists to defend workers' rights and economic and social conditions and to preserve their jobs.

In reply to a question about the union's opposition to the government's economic plan, Benhamouda says that the union believes that the government should hold talks with the UGTA similar to any talks that it holds with the IMF. He says it is the union's job to defend workers' rights. He rejects accusations and newspaper reports that he is involved in politics. He also says that he is opposed to terrorism and to parties that advocate terrorism.

The correspondent asks Benhamouda once more about his resignation from the UGTA's leadership. He replies that he is not resigning, but that his term in office has come to an end.

Benhamouda denies that any partisan pressures on the union will have any effect.

As for the threat of strikes by the construction and hydrocarbon workers, Benhamouda says that the UGTA is behind these strike notices and is also behind their suspension, because it the UGTA's responsibility to defend workers' rights and jobs.

Concerning the union's stance on the upcoming presidential elections, Benhamouda says that he supports dialogue, but that he believes that the dialogue with the parties concerned was leading nowhere because some of them insisted on the participation of the armed groups. He says that the union refused to take part in such a dialogue, because it was an unarmed peaceful body. He adds that it is impossible to discuss the solutions to the country's problems in the 1990's with the mentality of the 1940's, which is the mentality of some political leaders.

With regard to the presidential elections, Benhamouda lists the following conditions:

1. Voters' list should be ready by April-May.

2. Impartial supervision over these elections should be ensured.

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3. Unbiased administration should be ensured, as most municipalities are ruled by representatives of political parties.

4. Presidential elections should take place before legislative elections to ensure that legitimacy was granted to the top of the pyramid.

Benhamouda says he believes that terrorism is not escalating in Algeria, but that the state is combating terrorism. He says that he prefers the rule of a tyrant who builds schools and makes transportation available to that of a nationalist who sets fire to schools and buses.

In reply to a question about news reports claiming that he could be a candidate in the presidential elections, Benhamouda says he is not as stupid and naive as some Algerian politicians, because such a step requires preparations and political programs.

Affirms Intention To Resign

LD1312195894 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 13 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] In a statement published today by the daily LE SOIR D'ALGERIE, Mr. Abdelhak Benhamouda, secretary-general of the General Union of Algerian Workers affirmed his intention to leave the union shortly. Mr. Benhamouda, who has led the union since 1990, brought back to mind that this decision of his was taken one year ago, and that he had come to preserve the trade union organization which is now threatened through his person given that, according to him, it is being said that Benhamouda prefers political activity to trade unionist activity.

Two 'Terrorists' Killed; Weapons Recovered

LD1412213494 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 14 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] A statement issued by the Security Services said that based on information provided by citizens the security forces launched on Tuesday a search in a quarter in Annaba, which led to the elimination of two terrorists and the recovery of two automatic guns.

According to the same source, one of the two terrorists was identified as Bijibir Djalul, aged 30, leader of terrorist groups in Annaba area. This criminal used to live in Laghouat and was wanted by the security forces since 2 January 1993 for committing a number of assassinations that he carried out with the criminal Harith in Annaba Province, as well as the attack on a gendarmerie unit in Kasr El Hiran in Laghouat.

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Bahrain

Clashes Erupt; Opposition Says Martial Law Imposed

NC1412221594 Paris AFP in English 2124 GMT 14 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nicosia, Dec 14 (AFP)—Hundreds of Shiite Muslims have clashed with police in protests in Bahrain, a diplomat said here Wednesday [14 December], as an opposition group charged that martial law had been declared in the Gulf state.

Police had arrested leading Bahraini Shiites during the clashes on Monday and Tuesday, the diplomat added.

They used tear gas to disperse the crowd in the riots, which broke out in the centre of the capital al-Manamah, is a Shiite- majority area.

Meanwhile the opposition Shiite Moslem Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain said that the country had been under marital law since the beginning of December with a curfew and "dozens of arbitrary arrests."

The front's secretary general Muhammad 'Ali Mahfuz quoting "reliable sources" said in a statement issued from Beirut that "great number of demonstrators have been wounded during a savage repression" by security services.

"The houses of innocent civilians have been attacked in a barbaric fashion and their furniture destroyed in wild searches," the statement said.

It added the arrests were still going on Wednesday and "an atmosphere of terror" reigned in the country.

"Large numbers of intelligence services personnel have been deployed in the streets and barricades erected," it said, maintaining that "a total news blackout" had been imposed.

There was no independent confirmation of the reports.

Diplomats in Cyprus added that protests erupted last week but were swiftly dealt with. On Wednesday police cars and ambulances were poised on the edges of the Shiite areas and as on the previous two days the electricity supply was cut for several hours.

The Islamic Front said in its statement that the authorities had "shown blind violence in face of the fair demands of our people, exacerbating the conflicts and angering the population."

It also blamed Britain for allowing "its nationals to head the intelligence services in Bahrain and keeping quiet about the crimes" of the authority.

British officers still head the intelligence services of the country which was a British protectorate from 1871 to 1971.

The group appealed to the international community to help the Bahraini people "get their rights and condemn the repression and flagrant violation of human rights."

The Sunni Muslim government has said that the Shiite Muslims only represent 35 percent of the population, but Western diplomats have put the figure at more than 55 percent.

Kuwait

Minister: Iraq Must Comply With UN Resolution

LD1412185594 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1716 GMT 14 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Paris, 14 Dec—Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah, Kuwaiti first deputy prime minister and minister of foreign affairs, said that there was an international demand on Iraq to implement all UN Security Council resolutions before the embargo could be lifted and before Iraq could be rehabilitated internationally.

In an interview with the Arabic-language magazine AL-DUWALIYAH published here today, Shaykh Sabah said the issue of lifting or maintaining the sanction was an international resolution called for by all UN member states rather than a Kuwaiti one. [passage omitted]

Replying to a question on the Iraqi-Kuwaiti relations if Baghdad complied with all international resolutions and sanction was lifted, Shaykh Sabah said: "if that happened and the Arab countries saw that it was in the interest of all of us to meet then there is the Arab League which would bring us together." [passage omitted]

Concerning the "rehabilitation" of Iraq through mediation, Shaykh Sabah expressed his belief that none of the parties can rehabilitate Iraq before it implements the international resolutions. When Iraq implements these resolutions, he added, any party can interfere. But "before that, the subject remains international and no state has the right to interfere in it" [passage omitted]

He stressed that what is being said about Qatar's relations with Iraq will not affect the relations between the GCC states because the member states "are linked with each other in terms of interests and security". [passage omitted]

In reply to a question on the Gulf states' relations with Iran, he said: We are neighbors, and we hope that relations between us will not lead to a clash and that wisdom and logic will prevail in settling matters.

On the resumption of relations between Jordan and Kuwait, he said: We are not enemies of Jordan. We have an embassy in Amman. All we want from Jordan is a positive initiative.

He added: Jordan had opportunities. It was expected to welcome the Iraqi recognition of Kuwait and commend the implementation of resolutions, but nothing of that

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kind happened. On the contrary, the Jordanian media behaves as though the war is still going on.

As for Palestinians, Shaykh Sabah said that Palestinians were to blame for their mistakes. He said: It is regrettable that no mention has ever been made of what Kuwait had offered the Palestinian people. At some stage the number of Palestinians in Kuwait exceeded that of Kuwaitis.

He stressed that Kuwait was still offering assistance to the Palestinians, but it had no relations with the PLO.

On the Middle East peace process, Shaykh Sabah expressed his conviction that peace with Israel will not be complete until a progress was made along the Syrian and Lebanese tracks.

He said direct boycott of Israel would not be lifted without a decision by the Arab League, and that it was linked to the peace talks between Syria, Lebanon and Israel.

Saudi Arabia

Paper Condemns 'Wicked' Iranian Regime

LD1512114194 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 0930 GMT 15 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Riyadh, 15 Dec, SPA—Saudi newspapers appeared this morning carrying the following main headlines. [passage omitted]

Under the title "The Iranian mullahs after 15 years of ruling Iran," AL-JAZIRAH said in its editorial that 15 years after they usurped the reigns of power in Iran, the mullahs have not learned how to exercise power, either at a local level with their citizens, nor at regional level with neighboring countries, nor at international level with the different countries of the five continents.

The newspaper pointed out that the deep-seated grudge ignited in their hearts when they usurped power was the one that represented the pressurizing force, which directed the policies of those mullahs.

It said that since the mullahs assumed power in Iran, the whole world has witnessed terrorist operations in numerous places, which left many innocent victims dead. These have until now been connected with the rulers of Iran, pointing out to the ugly crime committed by the Iranian regime against the sanctity and sacredness of the Ka'bah [the house built by Abraham] in Mecca, when the mullahs ordered their demagogic agents to organize demonstrations of a political nature in the name of Islam in the Ka'bah in 1407 A.H.

It went on to say that until now, and after 15 years of staying in power, the Iranian mullahs have not been freed from the domination of the deep hatred in their hearts for history and all Muslims and non-Muslims, using their inspired evil capabilities to deceive, destroy, and fish in the waters that they work toward dirtying in the same manner as the trumpets of their media have attempted over the past two days to kindle the flames of sedition between the kingdom and its sister, the Republic of Yemen—after the mullahs noticed the occurrence of a small misunderstanding over the issue of the Saudi-Yemeni border. But this has not achieved the wicked desires in engineering bloody confrontations between the sisterly Arab countries that they were seeking.

It pointed out that Iran's mullahs do not understand the language of dialogue, and that the only language they understand is the language of killing, destruction, and bloody terrorism.

It concluded by saying that on the basis of all that, the day before yesterday the UN human rights commission condemned the ruling Iranian regime for repressing and torturing the Iranians to the extent that the whole world was now on the verge of hearing their moans and screams.

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Hammadi: We Will Not 'Cave in' to UN Sanctions

OW1412123594 Tokyo ASAHI SHIMBUN in Japanese 14 Dec 94 Morning Edition p 8

[Report on interview with Culture and Information Minister Hamid Hammadi by ASAHI SHIMBUN correspondent Hosei Yanagizwa on 12 December; place not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 13 December—Commenting on economic sanctions against Iraq in an interview with an ASAHI SHIMBUN correspondent on the evening of 12 December, Iraqi Culture and Information Minister Hammadi stressed: "Iraq has recognized Kuwait and demolished nuclear and biochemical facilities. In this way, Iraq has fulfilled all terms of a resolution adopted by the UN Security Council for lifting the economic sanctions. Standing in the way of lifting the economic sanctions is the United States." While emphatically claiming that "although food is running short, Iraq will not cave in to the economic sanctions," he revealed some aspects of difficulty facing Iraq by saying, "Since 1990, 1 million Iraqis have died because of a lack of medicine, low level of medical treatment, and malnutrition."

In the interview, the Iraqi culture and information minister explained the present situation in Iraq.

He pointed out that "infant mortality rate has grown seven times since 1990 as a direct result of the five-year economic sanctions" and lashed out at the United States and Britain which have taken the lead in keeping the economic sanctions in place, saying, "This is a violation of human rights and contradictory to Western democracy."

Explaining the present food situation, he said: "Iraq is an affluent nation. We have managed to weather food shortages one way or another. We are now having difficulty dealing with the food shortages, but we are not in despair. People in urban areas have difficulty buying food, but those in rural areas have no problem securing their food at all."

During the interview, he disclosed that the Iraqi Government will lower its nationwide minimum food rationing by 30 percent beginning November, and stated, "We are willing to hold dialogue with the United States at any time." In this way, he revealed that damages inflicted by the economic sanctions are at a crucial stage.

In the interview, he asserted: "The situation is turning in favor of Iraq. Not only Iraq, but many other nations have been suffering from the economic sanctions." He also strongly hoped for an early lifting of the economic sanctions against Iraq.

Explosion Destroys Public Security Building

NC1412163294 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi People in Arabic 1500 GMT 14 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] A 5-kg explosive charge has gone off in the computer building of the Public Security Directorate in Baghdad, a notoriously repressive institution of the regime.

In a statement issued yesterday, the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq said the explosion targeted this department situated in the municipality district that carries out acts of murder, torture, and terrorism and gathers intelligence.

The statement added that the explosion destroyed most of the inner building of that agency and computer and other electronic machines and killed a number of the regime's security personnel.

The statement said the computers branch of the Public Security Directorate keeps information on oppositionists and accurate details about detainees, escapees, and executed people, together with the Statistics and Information Department of the Intelligence Agency.

'Popular Opposition' Attacks Government Posts

NC1412170894 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi People in Arabic 1500 GMT 14 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The popular opposition has carried out a revenge attack on posts belonging to the regime's terrorist agencies in Mosul and has managed to kill a number of personnel manning these posts.

Confirmed reports from Mosul indicated that the attack was in retaliation for the brutal repressive measures carried out by the regime forces and party personnel against citizens and clergymen in the governorate. The report added that these heroic operations caused panic among the regime security personnel and the ruling party.

Turkish Aircraft Attack PKK Bases

JN1312153094 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1410 GMT 13 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Ankara, 13 Dec (INA)—Turkish aircraft attacked the bases of the Turkish Kurdish Workers' Party [PKK] in the al-Madinah area of northern Iraq yesterday.

Turkish television last night said that Cobra helicopter gunships took part in the attack and inflicted heavy losses on the elements of the PKK.

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Regime Hands Over Banned Weapons to Iranian MKO

NC1412170794 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi People in Arabic 1500 GMT 14 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Iraqi opposition sources in northern Iraq have revealed that they have received reliable information that Saddam Husayn's regime has handed over a large part of its banned weapons to the Iranian opposition Mojahedin-e Khalq [MKO], which uses the Iraqi territories for its activities.

In statements published recently, the opposition sources said the weapons given to the Iranian organization consisted of long-range ballistic missiles, chemical material containers, and nuclear fuel substances kept in tightly closed crates.

The same sources said the ruling regime in Baghdad made this move because the MKO camps and posts are not subjected to UN inspection of the secret stores of Saddam's mass-destruction weapons.

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Fatah Official Says Iran Behind Camp Clashes

NC1412191694 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1715 GMT 14 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Sultan Abu-al-'Aynayn, the new official in charge of the Fatah Movement in Lebanon, has accused Iran of being behind the recent incidents in the 'Ayn al-Hulwah camp.

He said that the reason for the clashes was not a dispute between the supporters and opponents of the self-rule agreement but rather involvement, meaning by the Iranians, was clear because they wanted to retaliate against Yasir 'Arafat for what happened in Gaza on 18 November.

Hizballah Vows To Continue Anti-Israeli Operations

NC1412065394 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0630 GMT 14 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Shaykh Nabil Qawuq, deputy chairman of Hizballah's Consultative Council, has declared that the Islamic Resistance has been placed on full alert and a state of readiness to thwart any Israeli attempt to change things in the south.

The Hizballah official said: We will exhaust the Israeli army and make its presence on our territory extremely costly. He affirmed that the Resistance will continue its operations regardless of any changes or developments that might crop up.

Elsewhere, Hizballah Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah will hold a news conference today. Nasrallah will discuss the situation in south Lebanon and current political developments.

Hizballah Leader Warns Israel Against Operations

NC1412131494 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1145 GMT 14 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Hizballah Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah said today that any Israeli aggression will be expensive. In a news conference he held today, Nasrallah said: We confirm to Rabin and his army—and they know that we mean what we say to the letter—that the Resistance arena has no limits. Nasrallah said: The Marj 'Uyun and other operations come within the framework of permanent resistance.

On Israeli threats, he said the Israelis have very few choices before them. They are looking for targets and might resort to security operations. Nasrallah called on the South Lebanese Army, SLA, to learn a lesson from events of recent days. They must know they are of no value to the Israelis. Nasrallah said: Recently, through the International Red Cross, we proposed exchanging prisoners from the SLA with detainees in al-Khiyam Prison. Our proposal was rejected by the Israelis, because, for them, the Lahd prisoners are not a problem, he claimed. He asked the Lebanese Government to take an official and frank stance in which it will henceforth declare its absolute refusal to let any members from Major General Lahd's forces join the Lebanese Army. According to Nasrallah, the authorities must dash this hope so that they can at least have the honor of finalizing the collapse of this fallen army.

Nasrallah Urges SLA Personnel To Desert

NC1412185594 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1800 GMT 14 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Hizballah Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah has reiterated his call to the agent Antoine Lahd [South Lebanese army, SLA] personnel and all who collaborate with the Israeli occupation forces to repent, desert the SLA, and return to their people. At a news conference today at Hizballah's information headquarters attended by deputies Muhammad Ra'd and 'Ali 'Ammar, he stressed that the Marj 'Uyun operation asserts that the resistance is capable of breaking through the occupied border strip.

Nasrallah Denies Knowledge of Israeli Pilot's Fate

NC1512082594 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 15 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Hizballah Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah received French lawyer (Monique Picarduelli) yesterday. The lawyer has been calling on officials as part of her effort concerning Lebanese captives and detainees in the prisons of the Zionist enemy. The meeting was also attended on behalf of Hizballah by Shaykh Hasan 'Izz-al-Din, the official in charge of foreign relations.

The French lawyer said after the meeting that she sensed the Hizballah leadership's eagerness to find a solution to this problem by every means. She said the Zionist officials demanded the release of Israeli pilot Ron Arad, dead or alive, in return for the release of Lebanese captives and detainees. The Hizballah secretary general stressed that Hizballah has no information about the Zionist pilot. If it had, he said, it would not hesitate for a moment to provide this information in return for the release of all captives and detainees. The French lawyer said Lebanese public support for this cause was not enough. She said that because of Zionist procrastination, she has so far been unable to visit al-Khiyam prison. She said the occupation authorities questioned her about a statement she made that al-Khiyam prison is similar to Nazi detention camps.

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Media View Peace Process, Israeli Role

UN Support for Peace Stance Noted

JN1312154794 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1235 GMT 13 Dec 94

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] The issue of the occupied Syrian Golan Heights has been given special prominence in the debates of the UN General Assembly and the current Islamic summit in Casablanca. With a majority of 145 votes, an increase of 60 votes compared with last year, the UN General Assembly approved a resolution demanding Israel end its occupation of the Arab territories. The assembly urged Israel to implement UN Security Council Resolution 497, stipulating that Israel's imposition of its law on the Golan is null and void and legally worthless. The UN General Assembly resolution also urges Israel to stop altering the architectural features, demographic makeup, and legal structures of the Golan, and to stop building settlements. The resolution asserts that the General Assembly deems all past and present Israeli legislative and administrative measures that aim to alter the features and legal status of the occupied Syrian Golan null and void and states that these moves constitute a blatant violation of international law and the Geneva conventions. The resolution also demands that Israel stop imposing Israeli nationality and identification cards on the Syrian citizens of the Golan and that it stop acts of repression against them. What is new in the General Assembly resolution is that the European Union states, which abstained last year, voted in its favor, and that only Israel objected to the international resolution.

At the Casablanca summit, which encompasses over 50 Islamic states, the Golan issue is drawing special interest. According to the draft resolution presented by the foreign ministers of Islamic states, the kings, presidents, and participating delegates are expected to pass firm resolutions calling for ending the Israeli occupation of the Golan and condemning Israel's abnormal practices, such as acts of repression, attempts to change the features of the territories, the building of settlements, and tampering with legal structures.

If this means one thing, it means that the entire international community is convinced of the credibility of Syria's stands on the need to establish a just, comprehensive peace in the Middle East. Such stands expose Israel's intentions to obstruct the peace process, defy international will and the principles of international law, and insist on occupation and expansionist policies.

During the past months, and even after President Clinton's visit to Damascus and candid talks with President Hafiz al-Asad, Israel has been trying to cast doubts about Syria's positions and right to restore the occupied Golan. Israel claimed that Syria is not serious about the establishment of peace on the pretext that Syria disregards Israel's security claims. Moreover, Israel claimed that Syria threatens Israel's security and that giving back the Golan poses a strong threat to it. The consensus of the international community's opinion on the need to end the Israeli occupation of the Golan and to restore this Syrian territory to the motherland proves that the international community no longer pays any attention to Israel's claims and that it fully believes in Syria's sincere and serious endeavor to establish to a just, comprehensive Middle East peace that guarantees all side's rights and brings an end to all forms of occupation and repression. Only a just peace will uproot tension and place the region on the threshold of a firm and durable peace that can hold in the face of events and changes.

The Israeli rulers, who capitalized on peace for so long and claimed throughout the years of conflict that the Arabs, especially Syria, do not want peace, have now dropped all their masks. Therefore, they are obstructing the search for a just peace and pushing the region to the brink of an explosion. They even evaded the distorted Oslo agreement which they themselves set the conditions for. In this regard, Rabin said that he will not withdraw his troops from the West Bank and will not redeploy them away from populated areas. He also said the Palestinian elections, if they are ever held, will take place under the supervision of the occupation troops.

The entire world knows that Israel is persisting in the policy of evasion and procrastination and that it deliberately attempts to abort the peace process by refusing to withdraw from the Golan in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions and the essence of the U.S. initiative. The world is convinced that there can be no peace in the region without Syria and without Israel's full withdrawal from the Golan, that Syria will not relinquish an iota of its territory or rights, and that Israel's maneuvers to evade the peace process will eventually lead to the collapse of this process unless the international community intervenes and puts an end to the Israeli policy of aggression and expansion.

Rabin's 'Allegations' Attacked

JN1012114894 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 10 Dec 94

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In an editorial entitled "The Israeli Doubt," TISHRIN notes Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin's allegations that Syria is not working for peace is a new attempt to cast doubts on the Syrian position and to blame Syria for the stumbling of the peace process.

TISHRIN adds: Rabin is not only ignoring the facts, but is intentionally ignoring the responsibility that Israel must shoulder toward the peace efforts, especially since the Syrian position is clear. This fact was clearly expressed by U.S. Secretary of State Christopher after his

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talks in Syria when he said he felt there was a seriousness in the search for peace and that he held good and serious talks with President Hafiz al-Asad.

TISHRIN adds: Before and after his talks in Israel, Christopher also made similar assertions about Syria's serious position on arriving at a just and comprehensive peace. Rabin, however, refuses to acknowledge Israel's responsibility for evading the requirements of the just and comprehensive peace. He also refuses to respond to the principles of the peace process. Therefore, Rabin is trying to cast doubts on the Syrian position in an attempt to cast doubts on the entire peace process.

TISHRIN says: What worries Israel is the fact that Syria automatically understands the pretexts given by the Rabin government to conceal the desire to maintain its occupation of the Arab territories and impose hegemony and expansion at the expense of Arab rights and Arab territory.

TISHRIN concludes: Israel is fabricating clamors because Syria refuses to be pushed into partial solutions and separate settlements. The entire world—and Israel knows this very well—testifies that Syria has nothing to hide and will not yield to the carrot-and-stick policy. Its position is as clear as the road to the just and comprehensive peace.

'Fall of Jordan' Not To Weaken Country

JN1212102594 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 12 Dec 94

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its commentary, AL-BA'TH says: When Syria decided to participate in the Middle East peace process, it set a clear and specific goal; that is, achieving peace based on Security Council resolutions and the land-for-peace principle so that this peace will be real, just, comprehensive, sustainable, and capable of meeting its aspired goals. These goals include restoring rights to their owners, providing the objective conditions for the development and building of the region, and eliminating all the hotbeds of tension and flash points therein.

AL-BA'TH adds: Israel, on the other hand and as was proven by events and ensuing developments, participated in this process with one goal in mind; that is, foiling this process, emptying it of its contents, and imposing its own concept of peace which is based on incomplete, partial, and distorted agreements and the peace-for-peace principle. The paper notes that Israel has done its best to extend the separate deals to the Syrian and Lebanese tracks. Nevertheless, it reaped only failure. The fall of Jordan and the PLO into the trap of separate agreements did not and will not mean that Syria and Lebanon will become weak and submit to any pressure aimed at relinquishment of their lands, rights, and interests, which are an integral part of the Arab nation's interests and rights.

AL-BA'TH stresses that, within this context, yesterday's Damascus summit between President Hafiz al-Asad and President Ilyas al-Hirawi stressed the two countries' continued consultations and coordination at the highest and broadest level as part of the efforts to realize just and comprehensive peace in the region.

Concluding, AL-BA'TH says the two sisterly countries proceed from one stand toward a specific and inescapable goal. They constitute, within the framework of the cooperation and coordination treaty, an example that should be emulated for sound Arab relations based on common interests aimed at protecting the nation's rights and realizing its interests and just and legitimate aspirations that would guarantee the building of the aspired and bright Arab future.

In a commentary entitled "The Will of International Legitimacy," TISHRIN says: Once again the United Nations stresses the need for the sovereignty of international legitimacy as regards the full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan and the return of its Syrian people to their occupied land. Once again, the paper says, the United Nations, in an important resolution adopted with a majority of 145 votes, calls on Israel to abide by the Golan-related resolutions, especially Security Council Resolution 497 of 1981, calling on Israel to rescind its laws, legal jurisdiction, and administration of the Golan, and deeming Israeli resolutions to that effect null and void.

TISHRIN says: While making every effort to achieve just and comprehensive peace, Syria stresses that peace can be realized only through the elimination of occupation and all its traces. Israel should never procrastinate or delay implementation of the resolutions stipulating the inadmissibility of the acquisition of lands by force and the inadmissibility of the continuation of occupation. This is underscored by the bases of the peace process, which is based on Resolutions 242 and 338, which call for the return of the Israeli occupation troops to the 4 June 1967 lines.

The paper says that these resolutions did not come out of the blue; they are based on the UN Charter. These resolutions were adopted in accordance with that charter and in pursuit of resolutions emphasized by the United Nations to reach a comprehensive and just peace in the region—peace that restores to Arabs their lands and rights and puts an end to injustice, occupation, and aggression.

Concluding, TISHRIN says: Syria's clinging to its land and constants and its insistence on the termination of occupation have created a groundwork of international support for Syria's principled stand and sincere and correct approach of abstaining from ceding or abandoning a single inch of its land in the Golan. This is what Syria has called for in the principle of full withdrawal in return for comprehensive peace.

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Rabin, Peres' 'Beautiful Words' Viewed

JN1312091294 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 13 Dec 94

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] Under the headline "The Wicked Israeli Recipe," TISHRIN discusses the recent statements made by Yitzhaq Rabin and Shim'on Peres on the future of the region. It stresses that they both failed to conceal Israel's expansionist and aggressive face.

TISHRIN says: Peres and Rabin used beautiful words to talk about the end of wars and to make several promises to work for peace and end the chapter of tragedies from the region's history.

The paper adds: The purpose of these sentimental statements was to influence the feelings of the Arab masses, throw dust in their eyes, paralyze their minds, and, hence, push them into accepting all Israeli arguments, which have an appealing and attractive surface but a poisonous substance. Despite that, however, Rabin and Peres failed to conceal Israel's aggressive and expansionist face and its objectives, which seek to rob the Arab territory and impose hegemony on the Arab homeland, plunder its resources, and confiscate its hopes and future.

TISHRIN concludes: It has been proven beyond any doubt that Israel has not changed its aggressive face, and that the great gains it made from the separate deals that have been concluded did not weaken its appetite for aggression, but, instead, strengthened that appetite and encouraged Israel to move forward in implementing its colonialist scheme with some minor changes in shape.

In another commentary published in the weekly "Spotlights" column, TISHRIN discusses the economic blocs in the world and the call for establishing a Middle East economic market.

TISHRIN stresses that this market is entirely an Israeli plan that seeks to strengthen Israel's control of the Arab wealth and increase division and discord among the Arabs. Therefore, the Middle East market plan will only deal another stab to the Arab nation and will principally benefit the enemies.

TISHRIN explains that the alternative has always been and remains the establishment of an Arab economic bloc. The means to achieve that goal is available and all the Arabs have to do is to pool their forces and strengthen their economic integration and revive the institutions of the joint Arab economic action. This is the only alternative that will enable them to face the hostile schemes that seek to usurp their will, resources, and wealth.

TISHRIN concludes; What is certain is that any step the Arabs take in a different direction—the direction of their unity and economic aspirations—will not achieve the desired goals or help them achieve the required economic development. Instead, it will make them weak in a world, in which the hegemony of the strong is increasing.

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India

Seven Ministers Offer To Resign To Help Party

BK1412161694 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 14 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Seven union ministers have offered to make any sacrifice to strengthen the hands of the prime minister and refurbish the party's image. One of the ministers, Mr. S. Krishnakumar, said in New Delhi today that they expressed their readiness to resign to help the prime minister reconstitute his council of ministers. The other ministers—Mr. Salman Khursheed, Mr, K.P. Singh Deo, Mr. Kamal Nath, Mr. Jagdish Tytler, Ms. Sukhbans Kaur, and Ms. Shailja, along with Mr. S. Krishnakumar and about 50 members of parliament met Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao and urged him to act firmly against persons having a bad image. These ministers and MP's met the prime minister a few hours before the crucial meeting of the Congress Working Committee to chalk out the strategy for the coming elections in five states.

Meanwhile, the Congress-I Working Committee is meeting now in the capital. The highest decision-making body of the party will discuss, among other things, the party's strategy in the forthcoming assembly elections. The general body of the Congress-I Parliamentary Party will meet in New Delhi tomorrow morning.

Eighteen Union Ministers Offer To Resign

BK1512092894 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 15 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Eighteen union ministers today offered to resign to help the prime minister to reconstitute his ministry, dropping those perceived to be corrupt. The ministers led by the union steel minister, Mr. Santosh Mohan Dev, met the prime minister, Mr. Narasimha Rao, soon after the Congress-I party meeting and urged him to reconstitute his ministry. They said Mr. Rao should get the resignations of the ministers who are under cloud. The other ministers are: Mr. P.A. Sangma, Mr. P.K. Thungon, Mr. S. Krishnakumar, Mr. Mukul Balkrishna Wasnik, Mr. Salman Khursheed, Mr. K.P. Singhdeo, Mr. Ram Lal Rahi, Ms. Shailja, Dr. C. Silvera, Mr. Pawan Singh Ghatowar, Mr. P.V. Rangayya Naidu, Mr. Eduardo Faleiro, Mr. P.M. Sayeed, Ms. Sukhbans Bhinder Kaur, Mr. R.L. Bhatia, Mr. K.V. Thangkabalu, and Mr. M. Arunachalam.

Rehabilitation Camps Planned for 'Militants'

BK1512034994 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 15 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jammu and Kashmir Governor General K.V. Krishhna Rao has announced that rehabilitation camps are being set up where surrendered militants would be lodged till they are properly rehabilitated. Addressing a meeting of leaders of political parties and prominent citizens at Bhadarwah in Kishtwar, the governor said that the militants are the citizens of the country who are misled and forced to take up arms by Pakistan. He said the government would like them to surrender and stop their life afresh.

Report on Rao's Health Called 'Baseless'

BK1412141394 Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES in English 10 Dec 94 pp 1, 24

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New Delhi, Dec. 9—"Amazing. Irresponsible. Baseless". This is how senior officials in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and the official spokesman reacted to the startling story in THE TIMES OF INDIA today that Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao may be more unwell than he looks and is reportedly suffering from emphysema.

Mr Rao, meanwhile, attended all his engagements for the day, beginning with a meeting at the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry in the forenoon. He addressed the gathering for more than an hour.

As expected, the PMO and others connected with the Prime Minister's Press relations were deluged with queries, not to speak of the scare that the newspaper report had created in the Capital and outside.

"The Prime Minister is feeling fit and fine", maintained his Information Adviser, Mr P. V. R. K. Prasad, who dismissed the report as "mischievous and unfounded". What he found amazing was the presumption that the Prime Minister's entourage could have moved incognito during his stay in Thiruvananthapuram last month for a check-up at the Chitra Tirunal Medical Centre there.

He said Mr Rao has been working 14 to 15 hours daily and attending to his engagements, besides disposing of files and meeting a host of visitors as was required of him. Even last night, the Prime Minister was busy meeting officials at his Race Course Road residence till 10 p.m. after he had presided over the meetings of the Cabinet and the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs.

Other senior officials regretted that THE TIMES OF INDIA has sought to dwell on the Prime Minister's health without as much as trying to cross-check the facts. "No doctor has advised him (Mr Rao) to attend to official work for only about two to two-and-a-half hours daily", they said.

Later in the evening, the official spokesman sought to set the record straight by emphasising that the Prime Minister's "health is an perfect shape". Without naming THE TIMES OF INDIA, he said the report published in that paper is an "irresponsible one".

Elaborating, the spokesman said the "story was not verified with official sources" as claimed in the report nor "did it assess the fallout of the baseless report on the

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economy of the country". He stressed nobody contacted him or the Information Adviser to the Prime Minister in this regard.

He said the story has "erred on all the facts." He pointed out the Prime Minister did not undergo any kind of medical check-up at Thiruvananthapuram. Tne Chitra Tirunal Medical Centre at Thiruvananthapuram has also issued a denial that the Prime Minister had gone there for a medical check-up or that any specialist from the centre had called on Mr Rao for this purpose.

The spokesman said the story also states that the Prime Minister had no official engagement in Kerala at Thiruvananthapuramin particular which again was wrong. The Prime Minister had specially gone to Thiruvananthapuram to address an international conference on Indology on Nov. 28.

"The Prime Minister does not suffer from emphysema, nor has he been advised bypass surgery as claimed in the report," the spokesman explained, and added: "Mr Rao is keeping his busy schedule—diplomatic, public and official—ever since he returned after the hectic election campaign in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh."

Authoritative sources dealing with the Prime Minister's engagements and those connected with his security said, Mr Rao reached Thiruvananthapuram on Nov. 27 afternoon, which happened to be a Sunday, after campaigning in the coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh and having spent the previous night at Nellore.

Mr Rao remained closeted that Sunday in the Raj Bhavan in Thiruvananthapuram, meeting the Kerala Chief Minister and other Congress leaders. He spent a greater part of the afternoon and evening working on the computer preparing the points that he wanted to touch upon at the International Conference of Indologists organised by the Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR).

Earlier, on his arrival at the airport, Mr Rao had told Presspersons that he had nothing much to say and wanted to take some rest and prepare for the conference of Indologists as it was a specialised subject.

On Nov. 28, Mr Rao gave an interview to the BBC Telugu service and inaugurated the International Conference of Indologists. That afternoon the PM left for Bangalore, where he rounded off his election campaign by addressing a rally before returning to the Capital late at night. THE TIMES OF INDIA news report was termed as "false and baseless" by Congress spokesman V. N. Gadgil too, while talking to newspersons at his daily Press briefing.

Iran

Khamene'i Criticizes Power Struggle Over Marja'iyat

LD1412162294 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1105 GMT 14 Dec 94

[Speech by Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i, leader of the Islamic revolution, to "various strata of the people" in Tehran on 14 December—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. [passage omitted] I am worried about the meeting of the Islamic Conference Organization [ICO], which is being held in Morocco these days. I hope that it will not be the case that the heads of Islamic countries are brought together and some word or statement extracted from them, on the basis of tricks and deception, in support of the interest of the usurper Zionist regime. Then they would say; that is what Islamic countries agreed to. Let the heads of Islamic countries be vigilant in that conference. Enemy infiltrators and traitors of the world of Islam may achieve their aims. Of course, our trusted representative, Foreign Minister Velayati, is there, and if they think that they can issue a joint statement—he will express our decisive viewpoints.

This in itself is a source of concern for the world of Islam that a conference should be convened under the name of Islam and then instead of dealing with the pains of Muslims, it should heed wishes and requests of America and Israel and try to remedy their problems. We hope that it is not like this, God willing.

Or when Muslims of Bihac are being massacred, they just sit and watch it. If Islamic nations had cooperated and had designated a day in which they would just verbally announce that they are unhappy with the attitude of the of European Community and the stances of the Serbs and the enemies of Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina, then this in itself could have resolved some problems. They did not even stop to do that. What can Muslim nations do with such officials? [passage omitted]

Another issue I want to talk about today concerns a positive point which is a cause for hope and optimism. This issue is the stances of the Iranian nation toward the enemy propaganda, and the presence of this nation at crucial scenes. [passage omitted]

I am referring to the recent demise of that divine scholar, the late Grand Ayatollah Araki. God only knows how many hundreds and thousands of hours the enemies had spent working and coordinating their ideas so as to be able to use this event for their own propaganda advantage. However, our nation, with their mere presence at the funeral in such numbers, nullified all the enemy's plots. [passage omitted]

At this juncture, in order to explain the magnanimity of what the Iranian nation did when the late Grand Ayatollah Araki passed away, I would like to refer to a few points. Also at the end of the speech, I would like to refer to a fundamental issue.

The enemies have consistently been pursuing a number of issues in their propaganda. Right from the outset of the late Grand Ayatollah Araki's illness, they sought to create a certain atmosphere in people's mind by their propaganda. Of course, these things should not be underestimated. Radio and other forms of enemy propaganda are very important. Do not just look at the Iranian

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nation who do not heed these propaganda. It is not like that in the world, where ordinary people are influenced by what these radio stations say.

The enemies believe that a political system can be toppled or reinstated by the radio. They think that by propaganda disseminated from the radio, they can induce people to attack a good person and beat him to pieces, or that they can manage to raise an unsuitable individual to the position of power and influence. This is the degree of the world propaganda think-tank's faith and belief in the power of radio and television. Of course, they may be right, but this only applies to places where there is no faith and no awareness. They have done many things in the world by employing radio and television stations. But they were unable to do a damn thing in Iran, because of our people's faith.

There were a number of issues which they wanted to tell our people. One issue was that marja'iyat [state of being a source of emulation] no longer enjoyed the usual prestige and dignity. Gone are those days in which Iran was moved when a marja'-e taqlid [source of emulation] died. Right now, marja'iyat is not that important. They continued to repeat such utterances in their radio programs. They then found a number of illiterate clerics, or infamous fugitives from here and there, and presented them with a microphone, as well as sums of money. These individuals then naturally opened their mouths and uttered whatever the enemies wanted them to utter. They were referred to as ayatollahs, even though they were illiterate individuals who had fled Islam and the nation, and were sinister and nasty people.

They want to make people listen to utterances by such individuals. They ask: Is marja'iyat in Iran as important as in the past? They receive the answer to that: No sir! Marja'iyat is finished now, and people do not care much about the issue. They wanted to insinuate this.

This was the first issue; that is to say that they intended to undermine the lofty and divine status of marja'iyat; a role which carries so much influence deep inside the body and soul of Muslims. They did this because marja'iyat has hurt them badly. They therefore decided to target their revenge toward marja'iyat as a whole, not just a mere marja' [source—person who holds the status of marja'iyat]. This was one of the issues that the enemy propaganda pursued during the 40 days of the illness of that esteemed scholar.

The second idea that they wanted to instil in the people's minds is that there is no one in the country, in Iran, who can assume the position of marja'iyat. Those great 'ulema [religious scholars] and those deep roots exist no longer. Grand Ayatollah Araki was the last one and now they are finished. That is what they wanted to instil. They spoke about this at great length. This was the second issue.

The third thing they wanted to say is this: they wanted to give the impression that the Iranian nation has turned away from the clergy; that it has no interest in the clergy. Yes, at some point in the past, in the early days of the revolution, before the revolution, the clergy were very dear to the people, but now the Iranian nation does not pay much attention to the clergy. That is the idea they wanted to instil. This makes three issues. Of course, they were also saying other things; I will mention some of them.

On the day when that eminent man Araki died, Tehran was in a state of turmoil. Iran was in a state of turmoil. [passage omitted] Why was Iran so disturbed? Why did women beat their chests and weep? Why did grown men cry? Why did they try so hard, in that huge crowd, to reach the coffin and to touch it? Why? What is the reason? I will tell you the reason: the people of Iran still believe in the lofty and great position of the marja'iyat.

Because the people of Iran really love the clergy—not, of course, the pseudo-clerics whom the enemy would like to present to the people as the true clerics—no, people resent these. But, people do love the true clerics because they believe that it is through Islam that it is possible to secure the fruits of the other world. Islam has given them goodness, freedom, and glory. Islam has given this nation freedom from oppressors and corrupt institutions.

Gentlemen, apart from that 2,500 years which they used to call the 2,500 years of monarchy in Iran—and about which neither we nor they know much—the people of Iran suffered a lot under the sinister and heavy shadow of the Pahlavi and Qajar kings in the past century or two. Iran was deprived of its historical glory and greatness; it fell behind in the race for knowledge, of civilization, politics and economics and it lost its vital resources. This is what the people suffered under monarchies. Who rescued them? Who awakened them? It was that great, holy man, the doyen of the clergymen, their vanguard.

People are fond of the true religious scholars. Everytime a true cry for freedom was heard from a movement in this country, its leaders were clergymen. This is history, a history which was not written by clergymen but by their enemies who, nevertheless, admitted that this was the case. This is something which people demonstrated. This propaganda therefore failed. They put out false propaganda that there was no longer anyone in Iran who was qualified to become a marja'. People saw, right in front of their eyes that, all at once, a list of ulema who were qualified for the position of marja', was issued by the experts on the subject, by those who are qualified to know and who are in control of the survival of the seminaries [the Qom Seminary School Lecturers Association]. Of course, these gentlemen put forward the names of five or six individuals—well, this is what they thought was best—it was not possible to name 100 persons. But you should know that today, if we wanted to count, there would be more than a hundred persons in Qom seminary who are qualified to be sources of emulation. Six of them were the seniors who were named, but, these are not the

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only ones. Two of them were named by the Militant Clergy Association [Jameh-ye Rowhaniyat-e Mobarez]—so these are not the only ones. There are a hundred persons at least. They say: Look here, sir, the ancient roots have come to an end, the generation of senior 'ulema has ended. What do you know about senior ulema or the seminaries? These gentlemen politicians of Britain and America and the world's news agencies cannot analyze the most obvious issues concerning our nation; they cannot understand and analyze the most obvious issues—if they could, they would not be defeated so much by the Iranian nation. They are incapable of analyzing but give themselves the right to express their opinions on issues concerning the seminaries which are indeed highly complex. It is the members of the seminaries who know who is qualified and who is not. What do you understand about the end or otherwise of the generation of great ulema.

Four top class sources of emulation have departed this world since the demise of the imam [Khomeyni]. Of course, there were more. But the most famous four were, the late Grand Ayatollah Araki, Grand Ayatollah Golpayegani, Grand Ayatollah Kho'i, and Grand Ayatollah Mar'ashi. Grand Ayatollah Araki lived for 103 years, whereas the rest departed when they were in their nineties. That is, in the year 1340 [1961-62] when the late Grand Ayatollah Borujerdi departed this world, the gentlemen who died in their nineties were about 60. It has always been the same.

When the late ayatollahs Kho'i, or Golpayegani, and Mar'ashi were introduced to the people as marja', their age at the time was either less or the same as the ones being introduced today.

What is the foreign media talking about? You are aimlessly wagging your chins saying: The 'ulema of the seminary are all dead. What do you know about the seminary ulema? How can you tell who they are and how old they are and whether they are all dead or not? You are making comments without justification. That is one issue.

Another issue is that they have begun naming certain individuals as source of emulation. They say: So and so is the top man and such and such individual enjoys the highest rank among the ayatollahs. They have begun issuing fatwas and decrees to direct the Muslim people, not realizing that the people are the most uncompromising on the subject of marja'iyat. And the people are justified to be so uncompromising on this subject. I would like to ask you my dear ones to remain uncompromising and choosy when you are dealing with the issue of marja'iyat, lest you should be swayed by emotions. Be rigorous and strict.

The best way is the same old shari'ah methods of choosing the source of emulation. That is, not one but two fair-minded attestors should recommend some one. They cannot be any two attestors as such. They must be experts in the field. It must be their job to identify and recommend the qualified figure. They can testify that so and so is worthy of becoming the source of emulation. Then the people can follow him.

Now look at those foreign gentlemen who expect the Iranian nation, that is, a nation which is so uncompromising on the issue of emulation, to listen to anything being said by those wicked and lewd individuals who run the BBC and the Zionist radio.

They say: Mr. so and so is the best and the people should follow him as the source of emulation. What a futile dream! No doubt the individuals mentioned lost any slight chance they might have had of becoming a source of emulation to a group, thanks to these radios. The majority of our committed Muslim nation have heard nothing but lies from these alien radios. They have heard so many lies and have seen so much wickedness and malice from these radio stations that they will do exactly the opposite of what these radios recommend. If they were to say: Follow Mr. so and so as the source of emulation; our people would do the reverse. This is the habit of our people and it is justified.

The imam, may God be satisfied with his deeds, used to say: Progress depends on doing the opposite of what these foreign radios and the enemy propaganda recommends. Whatever direction they adopt is the wrong direction. You should know this. The truth lies in the opposite direction of their chosen path. By adopting these stances, our people gave a slap in the face to the hostile propaganda of the enemy with regard to the issue of marja'iyat. [crowd chants in support]

I, too, do not know how to thank you people, the Iranian nation. You really did us proud with regard to the issue of the death of the late Grand Ayatollah Araki, the positions you adopted, your presence in the funeral procession, your presence in prayers, your presence in the memorial services. Thanks are also due to the gentlemen in Qom and Tehran who prepared a list of people who can be sources of emulation; they carried out their duty well.

Of course, it cannot be said that those who are not included in the list are worth less than those on the list. I cannot say that. As I said, if you go to Qom today, you will find at least 100 people whose names can be put on a list and you can say, you may emulate these people. There is no hurry. Contrary to what the enemy says—this is also a fundamental point—contrary to what the enemy was trying to suggest: that a power struggle was taking place over the marja'iyat—as the saying goes, the infidel believes that everyone else is an infidel too. When it comes to assuming some lowly position, they themselves—in those European countries, in the United States and so on, in places where the culture of materialism prevails—when it comes to assuming the post of governor of a state or a mayor of a town; to win a seat in a parliament, they are prepared to crush underfoot everything that is holy to them so as to win that post. That is what they are like.

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What I regret is that you dear people do not have the opportunity to see some of the written material and information which we have at our disposal. You would then see how pathetic the world is in terms of love of power and ambition. These very same personalities whom you see in the world, who appear in front of television cameras with their clean faces, their clothes ironed, their ties knotted, with frozen smiles, they were prepared to commit every imaginable crime to attain their position of power. Most of them are like that. [passage omitted]

They think that it is the same here. They think that the same thing occurs with regard to the marja'iyat. No gentlemen, you are wrong. There is no struggle for power. There is no fight. When it comes to the marja'iyat, many are those who, despite having suitable qualifications, do not mention themselves even once—30 years may pass, after 30 or 40 years, people think of them and go to them and they issue resalahs [religious theses] because of the people's insistence, like the late Grand Ayatollah Araki—we have many like that.

Right now there are those in Qom who are worthy of marja'iyat being the source of emulation. If thousands of people refer to them and ask them to come and get involved, they will say that they do not wish to become involved. Such persons exist, God be praised, they are there. They are there right now.

There are persons who do not even mention their own names. They know that they are wiser than all others. Most mujtahids know that they are wiser than others. I do not say that this is the case for all of them, but most are like this. Even though they are aware that they are wiser than everyone else, but they do not even mention this. That is the way they are. They do not want to become the center of attention, they are not prepared to enter the scene.

Following the demise of Grand Ayatollah Borujerdi, the eminent imam that, as you saw for yourselves—managed to draw the attention of the world toward himself and was so powerful that he could hold the whole world single-handed—he did not issue a Resaleh. He went and sat at home. People insisted, but he did not issue a Resaleh. I myself was one of the people who asked him at that time. But he did not answer me. He said that there were other gentlemen. Then a group of people went and forced him to issue a Resaleh. His fatwas were clear, his Resaleh was organized and published. We have many examples of such personalities.

Right now there are eminent personalities here and there in theological schools who were worthy of being named some 30 or 20 years ago, but they themselves did not mention their names and they did not allow those who knew them to do that. The rest did not even know them. What power struggle? The most important work that can be done by a scholar concerning his capability fort marja'iyat is that he can only publish a Resaleh and leave it at home. That is all.

If someone refers to him, then he could say: Here you are, this is a copy of my Resaleh, get it and go. That is all they can do, and they do nothing more than that. Now the foreign countries keep mentioning in their radio programs that there is a power struggle. What power struggle?

One of the baseless issues that they raise is that the majority of scholars are against the religion's involvement in politics, they therefore want to say that those scholars are against the Islamic government, they are against the Velayat-e Faqih, and they form the majority of the people. Here you are. Anyone who issues a statement forms the majority; those whose names are mentioned today are among the majority. Of course there are also unfit [nabab] personalities among the clergy. We do not deny that. There are unfit persons among the clergy, shopkeepers, university and army personnel and many other departments. There are unfit persons everywhere including in the clergy. There are those among the clergy who have enjoyed the blessings of the Lord of the Age [12th Imam] and are still ungrateful and they oppose the path of the Lord of the Age. There are those sort of clergy too. We do not deny that. Foreign radios can go and interview them as much as they like. They may be prepared to insult all sanctities of the Islamic republic in dozens of volumes. Such people exist, of course they do. But, first of all, not only there are very few of them, but they are also hated by the people of Iran and revolutionary Muslims.

If the persons that foreign radios and arrogant instruments resort to in the issue of marja'iyat let themselves be known by this nation, then do you think that the people would leave them alone? The Iranian nation does not forgive traitors. Up to today it has not forgiven them, and in future it will not forgive traitors either. [crowd chants support]

It is necessary that I should mention one point. I hope my dear brothers and sisters to listen to this issue without becoming emotional.

That day in the Assembly of Experts, after the demise of the Imam, may God be satisfied with his deeds, the very first day—I was also a member of the Assembly of Experts—the issue was raised and ultimately the name of this humble individual was mentioned. They were discussing who should be elected. They agreed that they should elect this humble and meek individual to this vital position. I opposed it. I expressed serious opposition to it. Not that I wanted to be modest. No. God only knows what was really going on in my head during those moments. I stood up and told them: gentlemen, please wait and be patient. These are recorded and exist. Both the pictures and the voice are available. I began to reason with them not to elect me to this post. I told them not to. However much I insisted they would not accept. However much I reasoned with them, the gentlemen, the jurisprudence and the religious scholars who were present and replied to the reasons that I was putting forward.

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I was decisive in not accepting, but then I realized that there was no option. No choice. Why is there no choice? Because, according to the words of these individuals that I trust, this obligation has been passed upon my shoulders. That is, if I do not take this burden this burden would not be carried by anyone. At this stage I said that I would accept. Why? Because I realized that the burden has to be carried. This is why I accepted. If there was another person, or if I had known that someone would take up this burden and would be acceptable to the others, I certainly would not have accepted to take up this burden.

Then, we put our trust in God and God has helped us so far. Before that date it was the same. I was elected for two terms as president. Both times I resisted. In the first term—I was just out of hospital—friends told me that if you do not accept this responsibility there is no one else to carry it. I had no option.

When the second term came, Imam himself told me that it is your obligation. I went to see him and told him: I do not want to take up the responsibility. I do not want to come up this time. He told me: It is your obligation. That is the obligation is not an obligation that one could not delegate to someone else. This is your obligation, it is an objective obligation. If it is an objective obligation, I do not want to abandon the burden of responsibility from my shoulders, my dear ones.

This is not the case in marja'iyat. The load will not remain on the ground [as heard]. This issue does not stop with one person. Yes, the gentlemen have given a list and this humble person has been included in that list. However, if they had asked me, I would have told them not to do it. They did this without my knowledge. I was informed after their statement was published, or else I would not have let them. I even informed the television, I told them: If the gentlemen would not be upset, do not read my name out when you read their statement. They said: No, we cannot do this. This is a distortion of the statement. The gentlemen held a meeting and decided that they could not do this. Therefore, they read out the list.

Let me say this to you now: Dear nation, my dear ones, eminent gentlemen and great personalities who, from this or that corner, send messages to me about resalahs and so on: my current burden is very heavy. The burden of being the leader of the Islamic Republic and of enormous worldly responsibilities are equivalent to several times the weight of marja'iyat. I want you to know this. If you put several marja'iyats one on top of another, the burden may be as heavy as this one; maybe, perhaps not.

There is no need now. Yes, if, God forbid, the situation became such that I could see that there was no choice, I would say: It does not matter, my shoulders, despite all my weaknesses and shortcomings, can, with God's help, bear ten times this weight when they have to, when it is necessary. The situation is not like that now. There is no need now. There are so many mujtahids, God be praised. I mentioned Qom, there are others elsewhere as well. There are mujtahids, worthy people. What need is there for this extra burden to be placed on top of the heavyweight which Exalted God has placed on these weak shoulders. There is no need for this.

Thus, when people insist: Sir, write resalahs, write resalahs—please pay attention to this: this is the reason why I refuse to accept the burden of responsibility of marja'iyat, because, God be praised, there are other gentlemen; there is no need as such.

Of course, outside Iran, that is another situation: I accept their burden. Why? Because if I do not pick up that burden, it will be wasted [zayeh khahad shod]. [Crowd chants: "Khamene'i you are leader of Shiites."]

On the day, please pay attention, on the day I feel that these gentlemen who are here today, praise be to God, and who I believe are qualified and have the necessary qualifications—we see that in Qom there are people who have even more qualifications than required to shoulder the burden—on the day that these gentlemen can shoulder the burden of abroad as well, then I shall withdraw. Today, I accept the request of Shiites outside Iran because there is no alternative, just as in other situations when we have to do something. However, inside Iran, there is no need. The holy presence of the Lord of the Age, may our souls be sacrificed for him and may God hasten his noble return [crowd chants: "May the peace and benedictions of God be upon Mohammad and his scion."] is itself the supervisor, keeper and guardian of the seminary schools; the supporter and guardian of the great ulema; the guide of the sources' hearts and the people's hearts. We hope Almighty God will make this stage an auspicious one for the people of Iran.

May the peace and blessings of God be upon you. [crowd chants support]

President Delivers Budget Speech to Majles

LD1412215194 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1858 GMT 13 Dec 94

[Budget speech by President President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani at a Majles session on 13 December—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. Praise be to God with almighty succor, I submit the budget bill for the year 1374 Hejira Shamsi [21 March 1995 to 20 March 1996] to the esteemed Islamic Majles. This is the first budget since ratification of the Second Five-Year Socioeconomic and Cultural Development Plan.

I would like to thank the esteemed leader for his efforts and effective support in specifying the general policy guidelines of the plan. I also would like to thank the

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government and the honorable Majles for their unstinting endeavor. I hope that the implementation and direction of the Second Plan in the coming five years will open the way for our country's socioeconomic and cultural development.

What was approved in the plan has influenced the government in compiling the budget bill for the year 1374. Now that the first plan is completed and we are on the threshold of beginning the second plan, I deem it necessary to go through some examples of the policies, objectives, gains, and bottle-necks of the first plan.

During the years of implementation of the first plan, fundamental changes occurred in the political and economic circumstances of the world. The Persian Gulf war, the collapse of Communism and its socioeconomic system, the new world order, escalation of crises in a number of newly independent states north of our country, the Afghanistan crisis, the start of recession in the industrial countries of the West, unstable oil prices and a drastic drop in its value during the last years of our plan, all or some of these factors could have adversely affected our country's social and economic prospects. However [passage indistinct]

I would like to ask the honorable deputies and our generous people to pay serious attention to the figures I am giving. These figures will truly demonstrate the performance of us all. These figures have been selected with care and we are prepared to defend them anywhere. If there is any doubt anywhere, it can be raised and can be defended.

This level of growth, in view of the economic recession in many countries and its influence on our economy, shows that the country's economy has been directed to make the best use of our domestic resources.

During the first Five-Year Plan the per capita Gross National Product [GNP] was about 197,000 rials at fixed prices in the year 1367 [1988-89]. The figure grew rapidly to more than 246,000 rials in the year 1372 [1993-94]. This demonstrates that the country prospered and became rich. Serious attention must be paid to this figure in response to some statements saying poverty has increased. Thanks to this growth, the downward trend of the GNP was reversed and began increasing.

During the years of the first plan, the growth of Fixed Gross Domestic Capital [FGDC] investment was 13.3 percent per year. Consumption [masraf] grew by 7.7 percent in the private sector and 5.5 percent in the state sector. That is, the private sector consumption was more than the state sector. During the plan the ratio of FGDC over GDP began an upward trend after years of decline; and increased from 12.6 percent in the year 1367 to 16.3 percent in the year 1372. Among the most important examples indicating the growth in this ratio are: Less bureaucratic control over the productive processes, reform of the distribution system, better pricing structure for commodities and services to serve the interests of the producers, offering guaranteed prices for products of the agricultural sector, greater involvement of the people in economic activities, and higher efficiency in utilizing the domestic resources.

Within the last years of the first development plan, oil prices in international markets declined. As a result of this, foreign currency revenues generated by oil exports deteriorated. However, the plan's projections had taken reduction in prices into account, and by adopting effective measures it was possible to avoid the impact of acute fluctuations.

With the development of nonoil exports, part of the country's demand for foreign currency was met. The country's nonoil exports during the lifespan of the first development plan amounted to the sum of $11.7 billion. The ratio of nonoil exports to all exports in general was 15 percent during the said period. This was unprecedented in the economic history of the country during the recent decades.

During the course of the first development plan, the ratio of imports of intermediary and capital goods to all imports in general witnessed an increase. I would like to draw your attention to this point because there have been some incorrect claims recently, stating that mainly nonessential goods have been imported during the said period. These figures, however, will reveal the true picture. During the course of the first development plan, the ratio of imports of intermediary and capital goods to all imports in general increased. On the other hand, despite the allocation of a considerable proportion of the country's foreign exchange reserves to meeting people's basic needs, the ratio of imports of consumer goods to all imports in general witnessed a decline. During the lifespan of the first development plan, the equivalent of $10 billion was spent on procuring basic commodities.

These figures as a whole show that in the course of the first development plan, the import of consumer and nonessential goods had been under more control than ever before. They also prove that the propaganda by some unaware individuals, who claim that the import of consumer goods has increased, is totally baseless. The changes brought about by the composition of the country's imports is indicative of the improved deployment of the country's foreign exchange reserves with the aim of strengthening the pillars of the production sector and implementing infrastructural projects.

In the course of the first development plan, in order to achieve economic equilibrium and move effectively toward a developed economy in which the government's share of economic activities is reduced, the government—in its implementation of the economic adjustment policy—constantly observed the principle of gradualism and the need to protect the vulnerable strata during the phase of transition from a centralized economy to a decentralized one. As a result of this, the government invariably devoted a considerable proportion of the country's financial resources to the payment

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of different types of subsidies and other forms of governmental assistance. In the first development plan, the sum of 5,651.4 billion rials, that is 11.5 percent of the total budget allocated to the plan, was directly allocated to subsidies and other forms of governmental assistance.

It is noteworthy that the main chunk of subsidies and other forms of assistance have been in the shape of providing foreign currency at official government rates for the purpose of importing basic commodities, including medicines. In reality, the economic value of the paid subsidies has been much higher than the above-mentioned sum. For instance in 1373 [year ending 21 March 1995]—in which as a result of the implementation of the policy of foreign exchange parity, the government's budget was more transparent than before—the ratio of subsidies and other forms of governmental assistance to the budget as a whole reached 21 percent. When we said 11 percent [figure as heard] earlier, it was because we had calculated the amount of foreign currency according to the government's official rate of exchange. That is why the figure seemed lower.

It has always been a fundamental objective of the government to realize social justice. The existing statistics indicate that during the first Five-Year Plan, distribution of wealth and welfare facilities in society were fairer than the past. This is a noteworthy point to us in view of the much misleading propaganda waged against us. I would like to ask the ladies and gentlemen to pay attention to this point. It is being said that the gap between rich and poor is widening as the rich become richer and the poor poorer. However, statistics show that the share of the poorer strata from the resources has considerably improved during this decade. Let me read out these statistics:

Families enjoy more of the welfare facilities and necessities of life. For instance, in the year 1367 about 30 percent of the lowest income urban families allocated 8.9 percent of their expenditure to the necessities mentioned above. In the same year, the 30 percent highest earning urban families allocated 59.8 percent of their expenditure to such items. Whereas in the year 1372 these figures changed to 11.4 and 57.7 percent respectively. That is, the share of the low-earning 30 percent increased from 8.9 to to 11.4 percent; while the share of the top-earning 30 percent dropped. Of course this is not sufficient. The gap must become much smaller until we reach the boundaries of social justice. However, the trend is right despite claims to the contrary. This indicates that the low-earning groups are increasing their share at the expense of the high-earning groups.

During the first plan the percentage of urban families connected to piped drinking water increased from 94.1 percent in 1367 to 97.7 percent in 1372. The figure for electricity subscribers increased from 98.7 percent in 1367 to 99.7 percent in 1372.

The percentage growth figures for piped water and electricity were greater in rural areas, thanks to our policy of implementing social justice. In rural areas the piped water percentage figure increased from 56.6 percent in 1367 to 64.6 percent in 1372. The corresponding figures for electricity subscriptions were 68.5 percent in 1367, rising to 76 percent in 1372.

During the first plan, more rural and urban families purchased durable consumer goods. When the people buy durable items, it is a sign that their standard of living has risen. On the other hand when they only purchase perishable goods for their daily consumption, it is a sign that they cannot afford durable manufactured items. For instance, in the year 1367 urban families' share of refrigerators and color television sets were 89.7 and 14.7 percent respectively. The figures rose to 95.5 and 36 percent in the year 1372.

Also in the year 1367 about 37 percent of rural families had television sets and 48 percent owned a refrigerator. The figures grew to 61 and 64 percent respectively in the year 1372.

In addition to the above cases, during the plan, in addition to implementing a number of national and provincial projects in deprived regions, over 1,050 billion rials were allocated to the eradication of deprivation from the said regions which led to a fundamental leap in the development of those regions.

In general, information available speaks of the fact that during the first plan, society's use of goods and services increased and the distribution of the essential goods of society was in favor of the low-income strata.

Population growth and unemployment decreased. Worrying trends in economic and social indexes were reversed.

During the first plan, a considerable part of the installations and buildings destroyed during the imposed Iran-Iraq war was reconstructed. Concerning the construction of infrastructural installations—such as power stations; the expansion of the nation's road network; increasing the capacities of refineries; increasing the output of petrochemical products; expanding water resources; extending the gas pipeline network, communications, post, electricity and water—considerable successes have been achieved.

During the plan, the level of literacy in country increased considerably. The country's educational resources in various levels of education showed a notable increase. There was a great success in providing health and treatment services. Large sums of money were allocated to the development of deprived areas.

At the start of the first plan, I would like the gentlemen to pay attention to this because I want to make a point, our country needed to import millions of tonnes of steel, metals used in construction and industry, aluminium, lead and petrochemical products. Today, following the successful implementation of the first plan, we are witnessing the considerable presence of Iran in the metals,

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mining products and chemical products export market. Our worst problem in implementing the plan was that around 4.5 million tonnes of metals had to be imported. Some of them were strategic, so we were dependent on the imports. Today, we are either self-sufficient or exporters in all these fields. I do not want to give a greater explanation.

I think this point is important because of the debate you have on your agenda tomorrow concerning the honourable mines and metals minister. Of course, this is the Majlis's right and the deputies' vote is binding on us. And censure is a good method of ratifying the executive. I have no opposition to this, it is your right. When I was the Majlis speaker, we had a few such debates. However, I humbly ask the gentlemen to take note of a minister who has changed the situation to this extent in his sector. He should be given a fitting medal.

Here, I think it is essential for me to draw the attention of the honorable deputies of the Islamic Consultative Majlis and the noble people to a point regarding certain decisions that the country is facing. For a number of years, for whatever reason—could the gentlemen please pay attention to this point— for a number of years, for whatever reason, the trend of consumption in the country was an accelerating trend. However, trend of investment experienced some shakiness and reduction.

In the first Five-Year Plan, the expansion of investment activities and the greatest possible activity in the field of development were among government priorities. We consider this to be an unavoidable necessity for safeguarding the country's future. Toward this end and as a result of government activities, the share of investments in the country's gross domestic product, which amounted to 12.4 percent in 1367 [year beginning 21 March 1988], rose to 16.3 percent in 1372. We announced this before. In some countries that have rapid economic growth, this figure exceeds 30 percent.

During the plan, substantial infrastructural and productive capabilities were created and some of the country's economic problems were reduced as a result. Those people who use some of the country's existing problems, which have recognized and deep-seated historical roots, as political capital to bolster their own position must take into account the following point: It would be much easier for the government, too, to create a flourishing consumer market; that would be much easier to achieve than a fundamental construction of the country. Bringing about a constant increase in new capabilities and prolonging the trend of construction in a country requires that certain difficulties and hardships should be endured today.

Towards this end, too, all people of goodwill and all those who care for their country's future must strive to pave the way to achieving this aim; otherwise, please pay attention to this point, the opportunity that currently exists for the fundamental construction of the country will also be lost like many opportunities before it. God willing, this will not happen.

In continuation of my remarks, the most important features of the government's activities in 1373 and plans for 1374 in various sectors will be presented. General education and technical and professional training: The number of students in the country is 18,286,000 in 1373 and will increase to 18,941,000 in 1374. In that year, 95 percent of the country's school children will be studying in state schools and five percent of school children will be educated by nonstate schools and adult education services. This should be noted by people who spread propaganda suggesting that education is becoming nonstate oriented and privatized. The figures are as I said: five per cent and 95 per cent.

Higher education and research: In 1373 the number of students studying in the country's higher education centers has reached 1,069,000, 50.4 percent of which are studying in state universities and higher education centers and the remaining ones in nonstate higher education centers. During this year, from the total number of students studying in the state owned higher education sector, 73,000 are in post-graduate courses. It is foreseen that the number of students will exceed 1,109,000 in 1374. Thus, please pay attention to this point, in comparison with 1357, the number of higher education students has increased more than sixfold. This should be noted by people, particularly people abroad, who spread propaganda suggesting that education is not given attention in Iran. During the past 15 or 16 years we have increased the number of university students sixfold.

Cultural affairs and physical education: The special attention that has been given in previous years to the development of cultural affairs was further strengthened in 1373 [year ending 21 March]. It is predicted that in 1374 too, this growth will continue.

In the area of culture and arts, thanks to the government's policies of protection, 9,200 book titles with a circulation of 61 million copies will have been published by the end of the current year. It is predicted that during the next year, with an increase in subsidies payable to the press and books to 80 billion rials, 11,600 book titles with a circulation of more than 76 million copies will be published.

At present, the circulation of the country's press is around 470 million copies. In 1374, this figure will exceed 480 million copies. These figures should be significant in the first place for people who are involved in the country's press.

During the current year, more than 70 public libraries and art and culture centers, as well as six cultural centers for children and young adults, will start operation in different parts of the country. In addition to the mentioned cases, during the current year various activities in the areas of producing films and plays, establishing art

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and cultural centers in mosques, holding Koran education classes, staging Koran recitation and memorization tournaments, publishing books for children and young adults, and holding special art courses for children are currently in progress. It is hoped that during the next year, they will continue with greater dynamism.

Voice and Vision Radio and Television: For the purpose of confronting the cultural onslaught by foreigners during recent years, and in line with the sacred objectives of the Islamic Republic of Iran system, the Voice and Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran has been increasing its activities. It has boosted its programs both qualitatively and quantitively.

In the current year, the broadcasting hours of Voice and Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran will be increased to 94,000 hours for the radio and 18,955 hours for the television. It is expected that during the next year, in view of the considerable increase in the credits available to Voice and Vision—to which the Majles has paid particular attention—the three television networks will increase their output. The daily output for the first, second, and third networks will reach 12, 10, and 6.5 hours respectively, and their total output will increase to around 11,000 hours.

In 1374, six new development projects will be carried out by Voice and Vision at a cost of 66 billion rials. This is in addition to other projects of the organization that are currently in progress. The implementation of the said projects is aimed at expanding the areas covered by the existing television and radio networks by 100 percent, as well as creating new networks.

In the second development plan, all parts of the country will receive radio programs, and all populated areas will be included in the television coverage. Furthermore, all the Voice and Vision centers will be equipped with color production studios. Necessary credits have also been projected for creating new networks, including independent television networks outside Iran.

In 1374, in comparison with 1373, the volume of operations carried out by the Voice and Vision will be increased by more than 2.5 times [figure as heard]. In the next year, with the deployment of around 500 satellite stations, more than 200 rural areas, which at present are devoid of television reception, will be covered by television networks. Also, 14 radio transmitters, 200 television transmitters, and 40 FM transmitters will start operation. Moreover, 10 radio studios as well as 20 television studios will be equipped and modernized.

Health and Treatment: With the implementation of building projects and other necessary measures, in 1374 there will be 13,200 operative village health clinics; 2,200 operative rural health clinics; 1,730 operative urban health clinics and over 30,300 villages will have access to clean water. As a result, health services which are offered free by the state, will be extended from 52 percent in 1373 to 62 percent in towns, and in villages, from 81 percent to 87 percent. Also in 1374, the number of hospital beds in the country will increase to about 97,900 and the number of doctors will increase to 38,500. We should not forget the difficulties we faced a few years ago on account of doctors. And today, we have achieved this number of 38,500 doctors fairly easily and this number will increase faster in the future. I hope that with the start of the implementation of the national health insurance, an effective step would have been taken to increase health care and protect the poor, especially the villagers.

Welfare and Social Security: One of the most important objectives of the sacred system of the Islamic Republic of Iran for which the government has taken some valuable measures so far is to offer support to the needy and extend the level of a variety of social security services. In this same connection, the main steps taken during the current year are the following:

—coverage for over a million people from among the esteemed families of martyrs, POWs, missing-in-action; selfless devotees.

—coverage for over 630,000 victims of natural and other disasters.

—Medical treatment, vocational training and welfare coverage for 375,000 people.

—Coverage of over 3.5 million people dependent on programs aimed at providing support to the vulnerable strata, such as assisting the social workers of the Imam's Relief Committee; the Shahid Raja'i project and helping others who are covered by the Welfare Organization. In 1373, the number of people covered by the civil servants' health insurance scheme will be 5.7 million. The number of people covered by the workers' health insurance scheme will reach 17.5 million and people covered by the social security schemes for white and blue collar workers will reach 1.184 million people. In 1373 [as heard], also, welfare services will increase and with the implementation of the national insurance law, medical care services will, God willing, cover approximately 3.5 million people among the needy and vulnerable and the bulk of the country's rural population.

Judicial issues and the maintenance of the internal security of the country: In view of the fundamental role of the judiciary in safeguarding the judicial, social, and economic security of the country, the strengthening of this sector has always been taken into consideration by the government. Among some of the goals and policies adopted in the budget bill for the coming year in connection with that sector one can refer to the increase in the percentage of the budget allocated to security throughout the country, the establishment of new security units, the creation of coordination and standardization of the telecommunication systems of the security forces, the equipping of border strips and border crossings with advanced technological equipment and, finally,

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the enhancement of non-direct methods of control in security issues, especially in traffic and transportation.

Administrative system: The study and review of the government's extensive administration, which is fortunately being studied by the Majles committees; administrative improvements in a number of governmental departments; the improvement of executive methods in some of the governmental organizations and departments; and, finally, making plans for management training and long-term and short-term training courses for employees are among the most important steps taken for improving government administration. On the other hand, the implementation of a coordinated system, planning for changing the pay scale of employees, increasing job-related bonuses, the introduction of efficiency bonuses and special bonuses for the deprived regions, are steps which have been taken in order to improve the living standards of the employees. The review and improvement in the formation of the administrative and executive management of other ministries, companies, and organizations; as well as increasing the on-the-job training courses, the preparation of an appropriate system for the evaluation of the implementation of decentralization policies and necessary projects for increasing productivity have also been projected for the year 1374.

Industries and mines: The industrial and mineral sector, which as the result of the policies which have been adopted is moving toward a better use of domestic raw material and machinery, has achieved considerable success during the current year. It is expected that as the result of the outcome of the investment which has been made in the course of the First Plan, in future years this sector will achieve considerable growth. It is predicted that in the coming year more than 120 industrial projects will come into production. Here I read the list of some of those projects which are the most important. Gray cement, three units with a capacity of 1.5 trillion tonnes. Cheese-making plants, six units with a capacity of 30,000 tonnes. Concentrated fruit juice, four units with a capacity of 90,000... [pauses] with a capacity of 9,000 tonnes. Children's food, three units with a capacity of 15,000 tonnes. Raw material for medicine, two units with a capacity of 9,000 tonnes. Motorcycles with gearboxes, one unit with a capacity of 150,000 units; and other things.

Paying attention to the growth of industrial exports, paying attention to the industry for converting agricultural goods, improving the quality of products and the expansion and adoption of standards for industrial goods, paying attention to industrial designs, research in productive units, giving priority to the domestic manufacturing of machinery and required industrial goods, providing appropriate conditions for increasing industrial goods and making economic use of the existing industrial capacities are among the most important policies which will be pursued in the next year.

Domestic trade: In order to support the bill on the campaign against profiteering and distribution essential commodities aimed at supporting the vulnerable strata, during the current year in excess of 3,100 billion rials... [pauses] Please heed this figures, especially those people who are outside the Majles should pay attention to these figures—will be paid directly to provide subsides for essential commodities such as wheat, ghee, meat, rice, sugar, cheeses, and milk. And next year, a sum of 4,139 billion rials will be allocated to provide subsides; compared to this year's sum of 3,100 billion rials, next year's figure increases to 4,139. It means that we increase the subsides which is above the ceiling approved by the Majles and will be paid despite all the budget and currency restrictions. The reason it is above the ceiling set by the Majles: I have said that in the Majles instruction it was stated that we should keep the ration coupons at the level of 1372 but you had put the Majles total budget for subsides at 3,600 [currency not specified]. We have changed the level of ration coupons to this year's level, that is 1373, but still it exceeded the Majles budget by about 400 billion rials, because it is not possible to distribute less than this year's coupon, if we want to protect the market. It is up to the Majles to decide.

Electricity: In 1373 a total of 2,882 megawatt new power generation capacity will be put into operation in the country—the people should also heed this figure, as expansion of electricity is very expensive and the investment which has been made in the past is bearing fruit now. Next year in excess of 2,130 megawatt new capacity will be added to them. The figure of electricity generation in the current year will reach 78.3 billion kilowatts per hour, which will have a growth of 9.8 percent compared to 1372. The growth of electricity generation in the next year compared to the current year has been expected at 8.2 percent. Therefore, we will be able to put a safe electric energy at the disposal of the consumers in industries, households and cities. In the current year and the next year, a circuit of 400 kilovolt exceeding 1,589 kilometers long; a 2,124 km circuit of 230 kilovolt and 6,368 km overhead circuits will be added to the country's power distribution lines. These power networks will help the country's electricity to enjoy a high standard. The power cuts which now appears in some places when one pylon is taken out of the circuit, will not happen in many places, as the circuits will be connected with each others and power will reach the sensitive points from several directions.

Also in the current, year electricity has been provided to some 2,700 villages throughout the country and in the year 1374 electricity will be provided to another 2,900 villages, God willing.

Oil and Gas: During the First Plan, significant investments were made to increase production of crude oil. As a result, the country's crude oil production reached 4.2 million barrels per day in the current year. We used to produce 2 million barrels per day at the beginning of the First Plan, and that with difficulty and at a loss due to

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the fact that we had problems with our wells, pipelines, and instruments. We expect to maintain the same level of crude oil production next year.

During the first six months of the current year, an average of 2,343,000 barrels of crude oil were exported each day; and we expect to export 2,235,000 barrels of crude oil each day in the coming year; which you yourselves have mentioned among our sources of income.

Currently the domestic consumption of oil is rapidly increasing and that is one of the country's future problems; and, in any case, we should think of the future generations. Fortunately this year the Majles took a step which, even though it is not very effective but, is the beginning of a movement which should be explained to the people and we should control its effects. That is one of the dangerous points in the future of the country and any caring person should pay attention to such a point that if our consumption grows as it is, then future generations cannot manage the country. Currently the domestic consumption of oil is increasing rapidly. During the first six months of the current year an average of 150 million liters of four kinds of main oil products were distributed within the country. Each day 150 million liters. It is expected that this figure increases to 167 million liters per day. The figure increases in winter. That figure will show an increase of 6.2 percent when compared to the figures for last year. The growth of 6.2 percent in the consumption of products is a very dangerous figure for the country's future; and that is despite the fact that gas has been provided at a fast speed. If we had not provided gas to our people, then we could see what an extraordinary growth in the consumption of energy we are experiencing within the country. That takes place at a time when the entire world are planning, and have also achieved success, to decrease the consumption of energy. But that is the way things are here.

Urban development measures: In recent years the government has implemented the policy of providing low-cost housing to meet the needs of the low-income strata. The government assistance toward building houses with ground area of less than 100 square meters will continue. It is expected that continuation of this policy would create fundamental transformation in the housing sector. In line with this policy, next year about 290,000 residential units will be built within the framework of subsidized and communal housing, thanks to the credit provided by the state and the private sector investment.

The next subject is new and I would like to ask the Majles deputies to pay particular attention. I also expect cooperation from the deputies. Whatever assistance is offered in this plan would be appropriate and appreciated. In order to assist about 500,000 married civil servants, who do not own their homes, it is envisioned that a special bank credit will be granted to about 100,000 such families annually, including those working for the military and the law-enforcement forces. The credit would be used for building or buying suitable housing for these families, thanks to resources of the Housing Bank and the civil servants' saving accounts. We have assumed there are about 500,000 married civil servants who do not own a house. The figure might be a bit bigger or smaller. We do not have the exact figure yet.

We have earmarked a certain sum in rials to provide suitable housing for families. Each family will be given a number of points, depending on the amount in their saving accounts. You will hear the details of the scheme through the media later. Thanks to the assistance provided by the state and the points we give to families, we think all civil servants will own property within five years. The scheme will not cost the state much. You will see the special assistance provided. The scheme will create many jobs. We attach importance to creating jobs in the second plan. The scheme would also attract deposits from the people. The plan will be announced and you will be informed. The scheme requires your assistance and if it needs amendment, you would amend it. God willing we shall implement the plan by cooperating with one another. At the present the civil servants, allocate a large part of their earning to renting their place of residence and this is a problem.

Soil and water management in the budget: The following projects are being implemented during current year:

Saplings of traditionally drought-resistant trees are being transplanted in a total area of 35,000 hectares. Public water canals are being built or renovated to irrigate a total area of 6,500 hectares. Sprinkler irrigation methods have been introduced in a total area of 22,500 hectares. Agricultural land is being mechanized and improved in an area of 51,000 hectares. Over 165 km of access roads are under construction. It is estimated that next year the said operations will continue and the figures will increase to 53,000 hectares, 15,000 hectares, 33,000 hectares, 90,000 and 200 km respectively.

In addition to the development credits allocated in the general budget bill, in the year 1374 a sum of 400 billion rials is envisioned as bank credit with subsidized commission for soil and water projects and sprinkler irrigation systems. A further credit of 20 billion rials is allocated to the new land and water projects, implemented by the revolution devotees. The latter is a new sum being introduced for the first time in the budget for the year 1374. The projects will expand in the coming years, God willing.

In the plan for pasture and forestry management, during the current year 690,000 hectares of new forests are being created and 71,000 hectares of the old forests are managed to prevent land erosion in various water basins. Forestry management has also yielded two million cubic meters of timbre and other wood products. It is expected that next year these activities will continue at the same level as the current year.

Projects are currently under implementation to combat land desertification by measures to halt sand dune movements. A credit of 18.6 billion rials was allocated to this

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project last year. The figure is increased to over 23 billion rials in the next year's budget.

The construction jihad, by mobilizing its resources, has managed to combat desertification in an area of 1.7 million hectares.

In the poultry units and livestock farms, this year 12 million vaccines were used to combat the diseases common to both human beings and animals. Over 2.5 million animals, reared for meat, are fed a special concentrated diet to accelerate their growth. Thanks to these services, it is expected that red meat production would increase to 645,000 tonnes and poultry meat to 600,000 tonnes. If this forecast were to be realized, we would become fully self- sufficient and perhaps we could have some surplus, God willing.

In the plan to increase catch from fisheries, about 10 million fry are currently reared to be released in our waters. The figure is expected to increase to 12 million fry next year.

In the plan for horticulture and arable farming, in the year 1373 weed control measures were carried out in 1.2 million hectares of land. The area will be extended to 1.4 million hectares next year. It is expected that next year wheat production in irrigated and dry farmed fields will increase to over 12,480,000 tonnes.

Water resources and irrigation methods: In view of the importance of water in the country's economic life, development projects in this sector have always enjoyed special priority. As a result this sector became one of the highly successful sectors of the first plan. In the second plan the Majles allocated an extra credit to this sector and I, therefore, think we shall leap forward.

Roads and transport: In recent years, by extending its railway network and its roads, the Islamic Republic of Iran has become an axis for connecting many newly independent countries to the warm waters of the Persian Gulf. In this connection, by extending Bafq railway to Bandar Abbas in the year 1374 and by completing the project connecting Mashhad to Sarakhs in the year 1375, the newly independent Central Asian countries will gain access through the Islamic Republic of Iran to the warm and open international waters in the south.

In the year 1373 the useful capacity of the country's ports exceeded 29 million tonnes per year; and the work for the construction of 15 fishing ports on the southern shores and five fishing ports on the northern shores, and the operations for implementing the loading and unloading of minerals in Bandar Abbas and Bandar-e Imam are continuing. In the current year nine fishing ports have also been renovated.

I am grateful to the ladies and gentlemen, the deputies, and I bid you farewell.

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